

Sūrah An-Naba'

(The Great Event)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 40 verses and 2 sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 40

عَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴿١﴾ عَنِ النَّبَاِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٢﴾ الَّذِى هُمْ فِيهِ مُخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٣﴾
 كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤﴾ ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥﴾ اَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ
 الْاَرْضَ مِهْدًا ﴿٦﴾ وَالْجِبَالَ اَوْتَادًا ﴿٧﴾ وَخَلَقْنٰكُمْ اَزْوَاجًا ﴿٨﴾
 وَجَعَلْنَا نَوْمَكُمْ سُبَاتًا ﴿٩﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا ﴿١٠﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا النَّهَارَ
 مَعَاشًا ﴿١١﴾ وَبَنَيْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعًا شِدَادًا ﴿١٢﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا
 وَهَّاجًا ﴿١٣﴾ وَاَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُعْصِرَاتِ مَاءً ثَجَّاجًا ﴿١٤﴾ لِّنُخْرِجَ بِهِ
 حَبًّا وَنَبَاتًا ﴿١٥﴾ وَجَنَّاتٍ اَلْفَافًا ﴿١٦﴾ اِنَّ يَوْمَ الْفُضْلِ كَانَ مِيقَاتًا
 ﴿١٧﴾ يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ فِى الصُّورِ فَتَأْتُونَ اَفْوَاجًا ﴿١٨﴾ وَفُتِحَتِ السَّمَاءُ
 فَكَانَتْ أَبْوَابًا ﴿١٩﴾ وَسُيِّرَتِ الْجِبَالُ فَكَانَتْ سَرَابًا ﴿٢٠﴾ اِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ
 كَانَتْ مِرْصَادًا ﴿٢١﴾ لِلطَّغْيَيْنِ مَابًا ﴿٢٢﴾ لِّبِشْيْنٍ فِيهَا أَحْقَابًا ﴿٢٣﴾
 لَا يَذُوقُونَ فِيهَا بَرْدًا وَلَا شَرَابًا ﴿٢٤﴾ إِلَّا حَمِيمًا وَغَسَّاقًا ﴿٢٥﴾ جَزَاءً
 وَفَاقًا ﴿٢٦﴾ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا لَا يَرْجُونَ حِسَابًا ﴿٢٧﴾ وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
 كِذَابًا ﴿٢٨﴾ وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ كِتَابًا ﴿٢٩﴾ فَذُوقُوا فَلَنْ نَّزِيدَكُمْ

إِلَّا عَذَابًا ﴿٣٠﴾ إِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ مَفَازًا ﴿٣١﴾ حَدَائِقَ وَأَعْنَابًا ﴿٣٢﴾
 وَكَوَاعِبَ أَتْرَابًا ﴿٣٣﴾ وَكَأْسًا دِهَاقًا ﴿٣٤﴾ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا وَلَا
 كِذْبًا ﴿٣٥﴾ جَزَاءً مِّن رَّبِّكَ عَطَاءً حِسَابًا ﴿٣٦﴾ رَبِّ السَّمَوَاتِ
 وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا الرَّحْمَنُ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِنْهُ خِطَابًا ﴿٣٧﴾ يَوْمَ
 يَقُومُ الرُّوحُ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ صَفًّا ۖ لَا يَتَكَلَّمُونَ إِلَّا مَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ
 وَقَالَ صَوَابًا ﴿٣٨﴾ ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمُ الْحَقُّ ۚ فَمَنْ شَاءَ اتَّخَذَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ مَآبًا
 ﴿٣٩﴾ إِنَّا أَنْذَرْنَكُمْ عَذَابًا قَرِيبًا ۖ يَوْمَ يَنْظُرُ الْمَرْءُ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاهُ
 وَيَقُولُ الْكَافِرُ يَلَيْتَنِي كُنْتُ تُرَابًا ﴿٤٠﴾

About what are they asking each other? [1] About the Great Event [2] in which they dispute! [3] Truly, they will soon know. [4] Again, truly, they will soon know. [5] Did We not make the earth as a floor, [6] and the mountains as pegs? [7] And We have created you in pairs, [8] and made your sleep a source of rest, [9] and made the night a covering, [10] and made the day a source of livelihood. [11] And We have built seven strong (skies), [12] and created a luminous lamp (the sun). [13] And We have sent down from the rain-laden clouds abundant water, [14] so that We bring out therewith grain and vegetation, [15] and thick gardens. [16]

Surely the Day of Decision is an appointed time, [17] a day when the trumpet will be blown, so you will come in multitudes, [18] and the sky will be opened, so it will become as gates, [19] and the mountains will be set in motion, so they will be as mirage. [20] Surely Jahannam (the Hell) is set in ambush. [21] (It is) an abode for the rebellious people [22] who will be abiding in it for ages. [23] They will taste nothing cool in it, nor a drink, [24] except boiling water and pus, [25] this being a recompense in full accord (with their deeds). [26] They did not expect (to face) accounting (of their deeds), [27] and they rejected Our signs totally. [28] And everything (from their deeds) is thoroughly recorded by Us in writing. [29] "So now taste! We will never add to you

anything except torment." [30]

For the God-fearing there is sure achievement, [31] gardens and grapes, [32] and buxom maidens of matching age, [33] and goblets filled up to the brim. [34] They will not hear therein any vain talk, nor lies, [35] this being a reward from their Lord, a sufficing grant, [36] (from) the Lord of the heavens and the earth and what is between them, the All-Merciful. No one will have power to address Him, [37] on the Day when the Spirit and the angels will stand in rows. They will not speak, except the one who is permitted by the Raḥmān (the All-Merciful) and speaks aright. [38] That is the Day which is sure to come. So whoever so wishes may take refuge with his Lord. [39] We have warned you of an approaching torment (that will be inflicted) on a day when one will see what his hands have sent ahead, and the disbeliever will say, "O would that I had become dust!" [40]

Commentary

عَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ (About what are they asking each other?...78:1). The word 'amma is made up of two particles: [1] The preposition عَنْ 'an (about); and [2] the interrogative particle مَا 'mā' (what?) (the last letter, that is, 'mā' has been omitted according to the grammatical composition. The sense is : About what are they asking each other?' Allah Himself replies to the question when He says:

عَنِ النَّبَاِ الْعَظِيْمِ الَّذِي هُمْ فِيْهِ مُخْتَلِفُونَ (About the Great Event in which they dispute!....78:2,3). The word *naba'* means 'news' but not every news is *naba'*. It means a 'momentous news of a great event'. This refers to the news of the Day of Judgement. The verse purports to convey that the inhabitants of Makkah ask about the Day of Judgement in which they dispute [while some of them believed in Resurrection, others did not.]

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه reports that when the revelation of Qur'ān started, the pagan Arabs used to form circles and discuss and criticise it, especially about the tremendous import of Resurrection and Judgement referred to in the Qur'ān. The pagans thought this was impossible, and they used to have protracted discussion. The disbelievers persuaded themselves to believe that the predicted event will never take place,

though there were others who believed in the event. The Sūrah opens by shunning the enquirers and the enquiry, it wonders that anyone should raise any doubts about Resurrection and Judgement. Some of the commentators express the opinion that their enquiry was not a genuine one where they were keen to learn about the truth. So they ask half-mockingly and half in doubt, when that event, so loudly pronounced, will happen. Qur'ān has responded by asserting one statement twice for emphasis, thus:

كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ. ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ (Truly, they will soon know. Again, truly, they will soon know....78:5) The particle *kallā* is negative, and means 'never, by no means'. It means here that this matter cannot be understood by question and answer or by disputation and debate. Its reality will be understood by them when they will face it. It is such a reality that has no room for questions, disputation or denial. The Qur'ān says that soon they will come to know about it [and this statement is repeated twice for emphasis]. In other words, when they die, they will discover the realities of the next world. They will see the horrors of the Hereafter with their eyes.

Then the Holy Qur'ān has pointed to different demonstrations of His power to prove that it is not impossible for Allah to destroy this entire world and re-create it once again. Reference is made to the creation of earth, mountains, human beings, males and females and the creation of suitable conditions for human life, health and activities. One of the things mentioned in this connection is :

وَجَعَلْنَا نَوْمَكُمْ سُبَاتًا (and made your sleep a source of rest,...78:9). The word *subāt* is derived from *sabt* which means 'to cut off'. Sleep is something that cuts off the worries and tensions one may have, and thus gives him such a rest that cannot be attained from anything else. Therefore, some scholars translate the word *subāt* as 'rest'.

Sleep Is a Great Gift

After mentioning in verse [8] that Allah has created mankind in pairs, Allaah Ta'ālā states in verse [9] that among the means of their comfort, He created sleep, which is a great divine gift. Sleep is a great source of relaxation for the entire creation - for rich as well as for poor, for learned

people, as well as for the illiterate ones, for kings as well as for labourers. This gift is made available equally and simultaneously for all. Rather, experience shows that this gift is most readily available to the poor and labouring class, as compared to the affluent and the elite class. The latter class has all the means of comfort, they have comfortable homes, they have moderately warm and cold places, they have comfortable mattresses and pillows that are rarely available to the poor. But the gift of sleep is not dependent upon the mattresses, pillows, cottages and bungalows. It is purely a divine gift that is given directly by Allah. Often the poor, with no means of comfort and without bed or bedding, enjoy the best sleep in an open space. Sometimes, the affluent and the men of means suffer from insomnia and can only get sleep when they take sleeping pills. Often the pills do not work either. Not only that this great gift is given to all creatures - humans as well as animals - and it is given free of charge, without working for it. Allah has made it compulsory for everyone in a way that even if he wishes to keep awake because of load of work, sleep is imposed on him by Allah's mercy, so that his tiredness is removed and he is refreshed to work further. This arrangement is a wonderful means of providing rest and peace for man.

وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا (and made the night a covering...78:10) This points to the fact that man naturally feels sleepy when light decreases and darkness prevails, when there is tranquillity all around and there is absence of noises. The verse under comment additionally signifies that Allah did not only give man sleep, but created in the entire world conditions that are suitable for sleep. That is to say: [1] darkness of night; [2] the state of sleep is imposed on all humans and animals simultaneously, so that they sleep at the same time. In this way, there will be peace and tranquillity throughout the world. Like other works, if there are different times for different people to sleep, no one will have peace and tranquillity.

Thereafter the verse reads:

وَجَعَلْنَا النَّهَارَ مَعَاشًا (and made the day a source of livelihood...78:11). Man requires, together with sleep, other essentials of life, such as livelihood. Otherwise, the sleep will turn into death. If the world would have had only nights and no days, and man would have continued to sleep all the time, how would he have obtained his livelihood and other essentials,

whereas day is the time when he could work hard and make activities in the daylight in order to earn a living. Thus the verses under comment purport to say that Allah has, in order to complete the comforts of life, made the night a cloak and the day for earning a living. وَجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا وَهَّاجًا.

Now attention is drawn to the comforts we get from the sky. The most useful thing in the sky is the light of the sun. It is mentioned in the following verse: وَجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا وَهَّاجًا (and created a luminous lamp [the sun]....78:13). Then, among the useful things below the sky, the most beneficial and the most essential thing is the raining clouds which are mentioned thus: وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُعْصِرَاتِ مَاءً ثَجَّاجًا (And We have sent down from the rain-laden clouds abundant water,...78:14). The word *mu'shirāt* is the plural of *mu'shirah* 'rain-laden cloud'. This indicates that rain comes down from the cloud. There are verses, however, that indicate that rain comes down from the sky. Those verses too probably refer to 'upper atmosphere'. There are many verses in the Qur'ān where the word *samā'* is used in that sense. Having mentioned these Divine blessings, the Sūrah reverts to its original theme of Resurrection and Judgement:

إِنَّ يَوْمَ الْفُصْلِ كَانَ مِيقَاتًا (Surely the Day of Decision is an appointed time...78:17). 'The Day of Decision' refers to the Day of Resurrection. It is a fixed appointment. Other verses indicate that the trumpet will be blown twice. When it is blown the first time, the entire world will come to an end. When it is blown the second time, people of the entire world, the earlier generations as well as the latter generations, will be resurrected and come in multitudes and droves. Sayyidnā Abu Dharr Ghifārī رضي الله عنه reports that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "On the Day of Resurrection, people will come in three different groups: [1] a group will come in the Plain of Gathering whose stomach will be full, wearing clothes and riding mounts; another group will come to the Plain of Gathering bare feet; and a third group will be brought on the Plain of Gathering being dragged on their faces." [Maḏharī cites the following authorities: Nasa'ī, Ḥākim and Baihaqī]

Some narratives report ten types of group. Some scholars say that the groups on the Plain of Gathering will be divided according to their deeds and character. The narratives are not conflicting. All of them may be true.

وَسُيِّرَتِ الْجِبَالُ فَكَانَتْ سَرَابًا (and the mountains will be set in motion, so they will be as mirage....78:20). The word *suyyirat* 'set in motion' signifies that mountains, which are taken as an example of firmness and strength, will

be shifted from their positions, and will become like little particles of dust flying about in the atmosphere. The word *sarāb* literally means 'to disappear' and it also refers to 'mirage' or an optical illusion, as of a sheet of water, that sometimes appears in a desert, because it seems to be a sheet of water from a distance, but when a person comes near it, it disappears. [Ṣiḥāḥ and Rāghib].

إِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ كَانَتْ مِرْصَادًا (Surely Jahannam [the Hell] is set in ambush. 78:21). The word *mirsād* means 'an ambush' or 'lying in wait to attack unawares' or 'a secret position for surprise attack'. Here Hell refers to the bridge of Hell. The angels of reward and punishment will lie in wait. The angels of punishment will make a surprise attack on the inmates of Hell, and the angels of reward will lie in wait to accompany the inmates of Paradise and take them to their abode. [Maḏharī]

Sayyidnā Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى said that there will be an outpost of guardian angels on the bridge of Hell. If anyone has a permit to enter Paradise, he will be permitted to enter; but if anyone does not have the permit to enter Paradise, he will be prevented from entering it. [Qurtubī]

لِلطَّغْيَانِ مَأْبَا ([It is] an abode for the rebellious people...78:22). The combined sense of verses 21 and 22 is that the bridge of Hell is set in ambush for all, the good and the bad. They will have to go over it. But Hell is the abode of the rebellious people. The word *tāghīn* is the plural of *tāghī*, being derived from *tughyan*, meaning 'rebellion'. Thus the word *tāghī* refers to a 'person who exceeds the limit in disobeying the authority [of Allah]'. This is possible only when he gives up his faith. Hence, the word *tāghīn* in this context would refer to the disbelievers. It may also refer to the stray groups of Muslims who have deviated from the limits of Qur'an and Sunnah, though they may not have adopted *kufr* expressly, such as Rawafid, Khawārij, Mu'tazilah and others. [as in Maḏharī].

لَبِثْنَ فِيهَا أَحْقَابًا (who will be abiding in it for ages....78:23). The word *lābithīn* is the plural of *lābith* which means 'one who abides'. The word *aḥqāb* is the plural of *ḥiqbah* and means 'ages or a long time'. Scholars differ on the exact length or specific amount of time meant by this word. Ibn Jarīr has recorded that Sayyidnā 'Alī ؑ states that *ḥiqbah* is eighty years, and the year constitutes twelve months, and every month comprises thirty days, and each day is equivalent to one thousand years, thus one *ḥiqbah* totalling about twenty million and eighty-eight hundred

thousand years . Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah, 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar, Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنهم and others say that one *ḥiqbah* is seventy years instead of eighty years. The rest of the calculation remains the same. [Ibn Kathīr]. In Musnad of Bazzār, Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar ﷺ traces the following Ḥadīth to the Holy Prophet ﷺ:

لا يخرج احدكم من النار حتى يمكث فيه احقاباً، والحقب بضع* وثمانون سنة،
كل سنة ثلثمائة وستون يوماً مما تعدون

"Those who will be put in Hell for punishment of their sins, they will not be able to come out until they tarry therein for a few *Aḥqāb*. One *ḥiqbah* will be a little over eighty years, and the year has three hundred and sixty days according to your reckoning [in this life]."

This Tradition, though does not interpret this verse, it does explain the sense of the word *aḥqāb*. Some of the Companions mention that one day is equivalent to a thousand years. If they had heard this from the Holy Prophet ﷺ, there is conflict in the narratives. In the face of such conflict, it is not possible to settle on one narration. However, there is a common denominator between the two conflicting narratives, that *ḥiqbah* means 'an extremely long period of time'. Therefore, Baidawī has interpreted the word as 'many long periods of time successively following the others.

Problem of Eternity of Hell

If it be argued, as some do, that the inmates of Hell, after serving the long ages in Hell, will be released because no matter what the length of *ḥiqbah*, it is, nonetheless, finite and limited and will come to an end some time or other. But looking at other clear verses of the Qur'ān, the argument does not hold up. We come across express text like:

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا

'[They, the disbelievers] shall remain therein [in the Fire] for ever'.

Therefore, there is the consensus of Ummah that neither Hell will perish, nor will the disbelievers be released at anytime.

Suddi reports from Sayyidnā Murrah Ibn 'Abdullah ﷺ that if the inmates of Hell are informed that they will abide in Hell for the number of pebbles in the entire world, they will be happy even at this information,

because these pebbles though will count into billions or zillions, still they are finite. If so, their punishment will, some time or the other, come to an end. If the same information is given to the inmates of Paradise that they will abide therein to the count of billions of pebbles in the entire world, it will sadden them, because, in that case, no matter how long the space of time they will live in Paradise, they will be expelled after this period. [Maḏharī]

In any case, the notion that after a few *aḥqāb* the disbelievers will be released from Hell is contrary to the explicit texts and common consent of the Ummah, and as such it is unworthy of consideration, because the verse does not mention what will happen after the *aḥqāb*. It merely mentions that they will have to abide in Hell 'for ages [*aḥqāb*]'. This does not necessarily imply that there will be no Hell after *aḥqāb* or its non-believing inmates will be released. Therefore, Sayyidnā Ḥasan ؓ says that no specific period has been defined for the inmates of Hell, so that they will be released after that. It is that which has no end to it. Whenever one *ḥiqbah* [era] is over, a new *ḥiqbah* will start; when the second era come to an end, a third *ḥiqbah* will start; when the third *ḥiqbah* ends, the fourth *ḥiqbah* will start; and it will carry on ad infinitum. Sayyidnā Sa'īd Ibn Jubair ؓ also interprets the word *aḥqāb* as referring to 'the time which has no end to it. Whenever one era ends, a new era follows it until eternity'. [Ibn Kathīr and Maḏharī]. Ibn Kathīr describes another possibility which Qurtubī supports and Maḏharī adopts. The possibility is that the word *ṭāghīn* 'rebellious people' probably does not refer to the disbelievers, but to the people of *Tauḥīd*, who, on account of their false beliefs, fall into one of the categories of deviant groups. Traditionalists refer to them as *ahl-ul-ahwa'* 'heretics whose beliefs are not in keeping with the common consent of the People of *Ahl-us-sunnah wal-jama'ah*'. In this case, the verse purports to say that they are the people of *Tauḥīd*, but bordered on the boundary of disbelief on account of false beliefs. They, however, did not cross into the boundary of explicit disbelief. They will therefore abide in Hell for the period of *aḥqāb*, and then discharged therefrom by virtue of the creed of *tauḥīd*.

Maḏharī, in support of this possibility, has cited the Prophetic Ḥadīth which was reported earlier on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar ؓ with reference to Musnad of Bazzār, in which the Holy Prophet

ﷺ said that after the period of *aḥqāb* has passed, these people will be taken out of Hell. Abū Ḥayyān, however, disputes this on the grounds of the verses that follow the present verse:

إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا لَا يَرْجُونَ حِسَابًا. وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا كِذَابًا

(They did not expect [to face] accounting [of their deeds], and they rejected Our signs totally....78:28)

These verses contradict the possibility that *ṭāghīn* 'rebellious people' could be referring to people of Tauhid and deviant groups, because in the concluding verses it is expressly mentioned that they explicitly reject reckoning and utterly deny the Prophets عليهم السلام. Likewise Abū Ḥayyān rejects out of hand Muqatil's opinion that this verse is abrogated.

A group of commentators find a third interpretation of this verse. A statement after this verse, namely, لَا يَذُوقُونَ فِيهَا بَرْدًا وَلَا شَرَابًا إِلَّا حَمِيمًا وَغَسَّاقًا (They will taste nothing cool in it, nor a drink, except boiling water and pus...78:25) - is circumstantial clause to *aḥqāb*, in which case the verse purports to say that for the countless aeons of *aḥqāb* that they will be in Hell they will not be tasting any coolness of air nor any food or drink excepting for boiling water and [scalding] pus. When the *aḥqāb* is over, the condition may change, and other kinds of punishment may be imposed. The word *ḥamīm* means 'intensely boiling water if brought near the face, it would burn its flesh, and when put into the stomach it would cut into pieces the internal organs'. The word *ghassāq* means 'blood and pus, and washings of wounds that will ooze from the inmates of Hell'.

جَزَاءً وَفَاتًا (this being a recompense in full accord [with their deeds]....78:26). The punishment given to them in Hell will be based on justice and equity - a fitting recompense - on account of their false beliefs and evil deeds. They will not be wronged in the least.

فَذُوقُوا فَلَنْ نَزِيدَكُمْ إِلَّا عَذَابًا ("So now taste! We will never add to you anything except torment."....78:30). In other words, in the world they continued to add disbelief. If death did not overtake them by coercion, they would have continued to add disbelief, and today their punishment will be increased.

Thus far the punishment of disbelievers was depicted. As opposed to this, the reward and blessings of the righteous believers are depicted below.

جَزَاءً مِّن رَّبِّكَ عَطَاءً حِسَابًا (this being a reward from their Lord, a sufficing

grant...78:36). The blessings of Paradise described above is the reward of the believers and is an abundant grant from their Lord. Here two things are mentioned. First, these blessings are a reward of their deeds. Secondly, they are a Divine grant. Apparently, they seem to be contradictory, because reward means receiving something in lieu of doing some service, whereas grant is given gratis. The Qur'ān has combined the two words in order to indicate that the blessings of Paradise are reward for the inmates of Paradise only apparently, and in reality they are a Divine grant given to them gratis, because human deeds cannot be the reward of even those blessings which were given to him in the world, let alone the blessings of the Hereafter which depend entirely on Divine grace as is confirmed by the Tradition of the Holy Prophet ﷺ: "No one can enter Paradise merely by virtue of his deeds, unless Allah shows His grace." The Companions asked: "What about you, Messenger of Allah." He replied: "Nor will I enter Paradise merely by virtue of my action."

The word *hisāban* has two meanings: [1] a grant [that is] sufficient [and] abundant. This meaning is adapted from the following idiom: أَحَسَبْتُ أَهْسابْتُ 'aḥsabtū means that I gave him so much so that it was sufficient for him until he yelled out "enough, this is too much for me"; and [2] the second meaning 'balancing of account' and 'comparing'. Sayyidnā Mujāhid رحمه الله says that in this context the verse purports to say that the Divine grant will be given gratis to the inmates of Paradise. The grant will be in keeping with the degree of sincerity as reported in authentic Traditions. The deeds of the noble Companions are greater than the deeds of the rest of the Ummah. If a Companion were to spend in the way of Allah one *mudd* = [815,39 grams] and a non-Companion were to spend to the equivalent of Mount Uhud, the Companion's one *mudd* will weigh heavier than the mountain. And Allah knows best!

لَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِنْهُ خِطَابًا (...No one will have power to address Him,...78:37)

This sentence is probably connected to the preceding verse: جَزَاءٌ مِّن رَّبِّكَ عَطَاءٌ حِسَابًا (this being a reward from their Lord, a sufficing grant...78:36) In this case, it would mean that when Allah grants a certain grade of reward, no one dare speak about the grade as to why someone got more and others got less. But if this sentence is treated as an isolated one, it will mean that no one in the Plane of Gathering will have the power to speak to Him without His permission. This permission will be granted in some of

the positions of Gathering, and not in others.

يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الرُّوحُ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ صَفًّا لَا يَتَكَلَّمُونَ إِلَّا مَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ وَقَالَ صَوَابًا (on the Day when the Spirit and the angels will stand in rows. They will not speak, except the one who is permitted by the Raḥmān [the All-Merciful] and speaks aright -78:38). Rūḥ (Spirit), according to some of the commentators, refers to the angel Jibrā'īl عليه السلام. He has been mentioned before the other angels in general in order to show the greatness of his status. According to certain Prophetic traditions, Rūḥ is not an angel but a huge army of Allah. They have heads, hands and legs. In this interpretation, there will be two rows. One row will be that of Rūḥ and the other will be that of the angels.

يَوْمَ يَنْظُرُ الْمَرْءُ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاهُ (...on a day when one will see what his hands have sent ahead....78:40) Apparently, this refers to the Day of Judgement. Every person will see his deeds with his own eyes in the Plane of Gathering. This might happen in one of two ways: [1] his ledger of deeds will be given in his hands and he will see it; or [2] his deeds will appear in the Plane of Gathering, epitomized in a visible shape, as certain narratives confirm this. Still a third possibility exists. The word 'day' may refer to 'the day of death'. And the words 'will see' means to see in the grave or barzakh, as explained by Maḥzarī.

وَيَقُولُ الْكَافِرُ يَلْبِثُنِي كُنْتُ تُرَابًا (and the disbeliever will say, "O would that I had become dust...78:40) Sayyidnā ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه reports that on the Day of Resurrection the entire earth will become a plane surface where all human beings, *Jinn*, domesticated animals and wild animals will be gathered. If one animal had wronged another animal in the world, it will be given the opportunity to take its revenge. If a goat with horns had wronged a goat without horns, it will be granted the opportunity to take its avenge. When this phase is over, all animals will be commanded to become dust. They will become dust. At that moment the disbelievers will wish that they were also animals and would become dust like them, so that they would have been spared the torment of reckoning and punishment of Hell. We seek refuge in Allah from it! Allah knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah An-Naba'
Ends here

Sūrah An-Nāzi‘at

(Those Who Pull Out)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 46 verses and 2 sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 46

وَالنَّازِعَاتِ غَرْقًا ﴿١﴾ وَالنَّشِيطَاتِ نَشْطًا ﴿٢﴾ وَالسَّابِقَاتِ سَبَاحًا ﴿٣﴾
فَالسَّابِقَاتِ سَبَاحًا ﴿٤﴾ فَالْمُدَبِّرَاتِ أَمْرًا ﴿٥﴾ يَوْمَ تَرْجُفُ الرَّاجِفَةُ ﴿٦﴾
تَتْبَعُهَا الرَّادِفَةُ ﴿٧﴾ قُلُوبٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَاجِفَةٌ ﴿٨﴾ أَبْصَارُهَا خَاشِعَةٌ ﴿٩﴾
يَقُولُونَ ءَإِنَّا لَمَرْدُودُونَ فِي الْحَافِرَةِ ﴿١٠﴾ ءَإِذَا كُنَّا عِظَامًا نَّخِرَةً ﴿١١﴾
قَالُوا تِلْكَ إِذَا كَرَّةٌ خَاسِرَةٌ ﴿١٢﴾ فَإِنَّمَا هِيَ زَجْرَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ ﴿١٣﴾
فَإِذَا هُمْ بِالسَّاهِرَةِ ﴿١٤﴾ هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ مُوسَى ﴿١٥﴾ إِذْ
نَادَاهُ رَبُّهُ بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ طُوًى ﴿١٦﴾ إِذْهَبْ إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغَى ﴿١٧﴾
فَقُلْ هَلْ لَكَ إِلَى أَنْ تَزَكَّى ﴿١٨﴾ وَأَهْدِيكَ إِلَى رَبِّكَ فَتَخْشَى ﴿١٩﴾
فَإَرَاهُ الْآيَةَ الْكُبْرَى ﴿٢٠﴾ فَكَذَّبَ وَعَصَى ﴿٢١﴾ ثُمَّ أَذْبَرَ ﴿٢٢﴾
فَحَشَرَ فَنَادَى ﴿٢٣﴾ فَقَالَ أَنَا رَبُّكُمُ الْأَعْلَى ﴿٢٤﴾
فَأَخَذَهُ اللَّهُ نَكَالَ الْآخِرَةِ وَالْأُولَى ﴿٢٥﴾ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِّمَنْ
يَخْشَى ﴿٢٦﴾ ءَأَنْتُمْ أَشَدُّ خَلْقًا أَمْ السَّمَاءُ بُنِيَهَا ﴿٢٧﴾ رَفَعَ
سَمَكَهَا فَسَوَّيْتُهَا ﴿٢٨﴾ وَأَغْطَشَ لَيْلَهَا وَأَخْرَجَ ضُحَاهَا ﴿٢٩﴾

وَالْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ دَحَاهَا ﴿٣٠﴾ أَخْرَجَ مِنْهَا مَاءَهَا وَمَرْعَاهَا ﴿٣١﴾
وَالْجِبَالَ أَرْسَبَهَا ﴿٣٢﴾ مَتَاعًا لَّكُمْ وَلِأَنْعَامِكُمْ ﴿٣٣﴾ فَإِذَا جَاءَتِ
الطَّامَّةُ الْكُبْرَى ﴿٣٤﴾ يَوْمَ يَتَذَكَّرُ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا سَعَى ﴿٣٥﴾ وَبُرَزَتِ
الْجَحِيمُ لِمَنْ يَرَى ﴿٣٦﴾ فَأَمَّا مَنْ طَغَى ﴿٣٧﴾ وَآثَرَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا
﴿٣٨﴾ فَإِنَّ الْجَحِيمَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَى ﴿٣٩﴾ وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ
وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَى ﴿٤٠﴾ فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَى ﴿٤١﴾
يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ أَيَّانَ مُرْسَاهَا ﴿٤٢﴾ فِيمَ أَنْتَ مِنْ ذِكْرِهَا
﴿٤٣﴾ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ مُنْتَهَاهَا ﴿٤٤﴾ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُنْذِرٌ مَّن يَخْشَاهَا ﴿٤٥﴾
كَانَهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَهَا لَمْ يَلْبُثُوا إِلَّا عَشِيَّةً أَوْ ضُحَاهَا ﴿٤٦﴾

I swear by those (angels) who pull out (the souls of the infidels) vigorously [1] and by those (angels) who untie the knot (of the souls of the believers) smoothly, [2] and by those who float (in the atmosphere) swiftly, [3] then proceed forward quickly, [4] then manage (to do) everything (they are ordered to do,) [5] (you will be resurrected) on the Day when the shocking event (i.e. the first blowing of the trumpet) will shock (everything), [6] followed by the next one (i.e. the second blowing of the trumpet.) [7] Hearts, on that Day, will be throbbing, [8] (and) their eyes will be downcast. [9]

They say, "Are we going to be brought back to our former state (of Life)? [10] Is it when we will have turned into decayed bones?" [11] They say, "If so, that will be a harmful return." [12] So, it will be only a single harsh voice, [13] and in no time they will be (brought) in the plain (of *hashr*). [14]

Has there come to you the narrative of Mūsā? [15] (Recall) when his Lord called to him in the blessed valley of Tuwa: [16] "Go to Fir'aun (the Pharaoh). Indeed, he has crossed all bounds (in making mischief). [17] And say (to him,) "Would you like to purify yourself, [18] and that I guide you to your Lord, so that you fear (Him)?" [19] So he showed him the biggest sign. [20] But he rejected and disobeyed, [21] then he turned back, and

tried hard (to refute the Messenger), [22] then he gathered (his people) and shouted [23] and said, "I am the supreme lord of yours." [24] So, Allah seized him for the deterrent punishment in the Hereafter and the present world. [25] Indeed, there is a lesson for him who fears (Allah). [26]

Are you more difficult to be created or the sky? He has built it, [27] He has raised its height, then made it proper, [28] and darkened its night, and brought forth its daylight, [29] and, after that, He spread out the earth. [30] From it, He brought out its water and its meadows, [31] and firmly fixed the mountains, [32] (all this) as a benefit to you and your cattle. [33] So when the Biggest Havoc will come [34] on the day when man will recall what he did, [35] and the Hell will be exposed for all who see, [36] then for the one who had rebelled, [37] and preferred the worldly life (to the Hereafter), [38] the Hell will be the abode, [39] whereas for the one who feared to stand before his Lord, and restrained his self from the (evil) desire, [40] the Paradise will be the abode. [41]

They ask you about the Hour (the Day of Judgment) as to when it will take place. [42] In which capacity are you to tell this? [43] With your Lord is the final word about it. [44] You are only a warner for anyone who fears it. [45] The day they will see it, it will seem to them as if they did not live (in the world), but only for one afternoon or for the morning thereof. [46]

Commentary

وَالَّذِينَ عَرَفُوا (I swear by those [angels] who pull out [the souls of the infidels] vigorously ...79:1). The word *nāzi‘at* is derived from *naz‘* and it means 'to draw vigorously'. The word *gharqan* is its corroborative because the word *gharq* is used here in the sense of *ighrāq* and means 'to exert oneself much or to the utmost extent in the thing'. The Arabic idiom has it اغرق النّازع في القوس 'He drew the bow with great vigour'. The Sūrah begins with an oath by certain characteristics of the angels to affirm that the Resurrection is a certainty. The subject of the oath, however, has been contextually deleted. The oath of the angels is probably apt on this occasion because they are all the time involved in the administration and running of the world. They are executing their duties loyally. On the Day of Judgement, all material causes will be severed. Unusual events will

occur and the angels will be involved in them.

Five characteristics of the angels are mentioned which are concerned with or related to the extraction of the soul at the time of death. The purport of the verses is to affirm that Resurrection is a certainty. It starts with human death. Every man's death is his partial Day of Doom, and this has an important impact on his belief in Resurrection. The five qualities are as follows:

The first quality of the angels:

الَّذِينَ نَزَعُوا عُرُوقًا I swear by those (angels) who pull out (the souls of the infidels) vigorously.

This refers to the angels of punishment who draw the souls of the infidels vigorously and harshly. The words 'vigorously' refer to spiritual pain. The humans around the dying person may not be sensitive to the pain. Often it is noticed that the soul of an infidel apparently slips out easily, but this ease is perceived by humans around the dying man. The pain is felt by the soul of the dying person. Who can perceive it? We are aware of it only because Allah has informed us about it in this verse.

The second quality of the angels :

وَالَّذِينَ نَشِطُوا (and by those [angels] who untie the knot [of the souls of the believers] smoothly, [2]) The word *nashitāt* is derived from *nashṭ* and it means 'to untie the knot'. This signifies 'to untie the knot of something which contains water or air, so that it may be released easily'. This is metaphor for drawing out the souls of the believers gently, unlike the souls of the infidels which are plucked out harshly. In this case too the adverb 'smoothly' refers to the spiritual smoothness, and not to the physical experience. Sometimes, it happens that there is a delay at the time of death of a righteous believer. This may not be suspected to mean that he is undergoing some sort of suffering, although physically it may seem so. When the soul of an infidel is extracted, the entire scene of the punishment of *barzakh* comes in front of him. It is frightened by it, disperses throughout the body and tries to hide or escape. The angels forcefully extract the soul just as wet wool wrapped around a skewer is forcefully removed. When the soul of a believer is extracted, on the other hand, the reward, the blessings and the welcome news of the *barzakh*

come in front of him.

The third quality of the angels :

وَالسَّيِّحَاتِ سَبِيحًا (and by those who float [in the atmosphere] swiftly...79:3). The word *sabḥ* literally means to 'swim' or 'float'. Here it signifies 'to glide along swiftly as in the sea where there is no mountain barrier'. The one who swims fast and goes far in swimming or a boatman who moves directly towards his final destination. The 'angels who float swiftly' refer to the quality of the angels of death who extract human souls and take them quickly towards the sky.


The fourth quality of the angels :

فَالسَّيِّحَاتِ سَبِيحًا (then proceed forward quickly...79:4). According to Divine instruction, the angels do not delay in transporting the souls of people to their good or their bad abodes. The soul of a believer is transported to the atmosphere and blessings of Paradise, and that of an unbeliever to the atmosphere and torment of Hell.

The fifth quality of the angels :

فَالْمُدَبِّرَاتِ أَمْرًا (then manage [to do] everything [they are ordered to do,...79:5). In other words, the last task of these angels of death will be as follows: Those who are commanded to reward and comfort the deserving souls, will gather means of reward and comfort for them; and those who are commanded to punish and cause pain to [the evil souls] will organise means for that.

Reward and Punishment in the Grave

The Sūrah thus far confirms that at the time of death, the angels will arrive and extract human souls. Then they will take them to the sky and swiftly transport them to their abodes, the good souls to the good abode and the bad souls to the bad one. There they will organise means of reward or punishment and pain or comfort for them. The verses show that the reward and punishment will take place in the grave or *barzakh*. Thereafter the reward and punishment will be meted out on the Day of Judgement. Authentic Traditions give elaborate details of this. There is a lengthy Tradition of Sayyidnā Barā' Ibn 'Āzib  cited in Mishkāt-ul-Maṣābiḥ with reference to Musnad of Aḥmad.

Nafs [Self] Rūḥ [Spirit - Soul]: Qāḍī Thanā‘ullah's Research and Analysis

The readers are referred to a special research and analysis by the Baihaqī of his time, Qāḍī Thanā‘ullah Pānīpatī, that was presented in this book under verse [29] of Sūrah Hījr. Here the learned commentator has added some more details which dispose of many doubts which arise from the above Tradition: The human soul is a refined body which permeates the dense material body. The [ancient] doctors and philosophers called it as *rūḥ* or soul. But the real spirit is an abstract substance and a subtle divine creature connected in a special way with this physical soul or *nafs*, the life of which is dependent on the Divine Spirit. The pure, abstract and non-material spirit is the life of the first soul on which depends the life of the body, and therefore it is called the 'soul of soul'. The real nature of the connection between these two kinds of soul is not known to anyone. It is known to Allah alone. Perhaps an illustration would clarify the matter. If we were to hold a mirror against the sun, then, despite that the sun is 149.6 million kilometres away from the earth, its reflection comes into the mirror. And because of the light, that too starts glowing like the sun. The same thing applies to the human soul. If it exerts itself in spiritual struggle and ascetic discipline in keeping with the teachings of [Divine] revelation, he will be enlightened. Otherwise he would be polluted with the bad effects of the physical body. This is the refined bodily soul that the angels transport to the heaven and transport him back with honours if he is enlightened. Otherwise the doors of the heaven are not opened for him and is thrown down from top. This is the refined bodily soul, the Tradition notes, which Allah created from dust and to it He will return him and from it. He resurrect him. It is this refined bodily soul that gets enlightened and becomes fragrant. But the same body can stink because of [the filth of] disbelief and idolatrous practices. The 'abstract spirit' is connected with the dense body through the refined bodily soul. The abstract spirit never dies. The reward or punishment of grave is experienced by the refined bodily soul which keeps connected with the grave whereas the abstract spirit remains in '*illīyyūn*', and it feels the effects of reward and punishment indirectly. Thus the statement that 'the soul is in the grave' is true in the sense that 'soul' in this context refers to the bodily soul. The statement that 'the soul is in '*Ālam-ul-arwāḥ* or '*illīyyūn*' is also true, because the 'soul' in this context refers to *rūḥ*

mujarrad or 'abstract spirit'. Thus it is possible to reconcile the apparently conflicting statements.

فَإِذَا هُمْ بِالسَّاهِرَةِ (and in no time they will be [brought] in the plain [of *hashr*]...79:14). The word *sāhirah* refers to 'the surface of the earth'. When the earth will be re-created at Resurrection, it will be a completely level surface. There will be no mountain barriers, no buildings or caves. This is referred to as '*sāhirah*'.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ used to be hurt by the stubbornness of the obdurate rejecters of Resurrection. The next verses recount the story of Mūsā عليه السلام and Fir'aun to console him, and to show that the adverse attitude of the pagans is not confined to him. The previous prophets have also faced similar situations, but they endured them with patience. The Holy Prophet ﷺ too should exercise patience and fortitude.

فَأَخَذَهُ اللَّهُ نَكَالَ الْآخِرَةِ وَالْأُولَى (So, Allah seized him for the deterrent punishment in the Hereafter and the present world....79:25). The word *nakāl* means an 'exemplary punishment' or 'an extremely severe punishment given to an offender to deter others against committing a similar offence or sin'. The phrase 'punishment of the '*ākhirah*' refers to the punishment of the Hereafter that will be meted out to Fir'aun (the Pharaoh). The phrase 'punishment of the '*ulā*' refers to the punishment meted out to Fir'aun (the Pharaoh) and his army in this world whereby they were destroyed by drowning.

Further, the Qur'ān again disposes of the doubt of the rejecters of resurrection who pose the question: "Are we going to be brought back to our former state (of life)? Is it when we will have turned into decayed bones?" [10-11] In other words, this is a negative rhetorical question. They purport to say that it is not possible for them to be restored to life after death when they have become perished and worm-eaten bones. Allah responds that the Supreme Creator, Who drew out this universe without any pre-existing matter and without any instrument, certainly has the Supreme power to give existence to things after destroying them. Why should it be a surprise?

In the verses that follow, the horrors of the Day of Judgement are depicted. It is mentioned that on that Day, every person will be presented with his deeds. Described also are the abodes of the inmates of Paradise

and Hell. Towards the end, special traits of the people of Paradise and those of Hell are portrayed by which a man can decide in this very world whether, according to the rules, his abode would be Paradise or Hell. The expression 'according to the rules' has been used because many verses and narratives indicate that there could be 'exceptions to the rules'. For example, a person might attain freedom from Hell and enter Paradise by virtue of intercession or directly through the grace of Allah. This is an exception to the rule. The general rule is the same as has been mentioned in these verses.

First, the special marks of the inmates of Hell are described. They have two characteristics:

فَأَمَّا مَنْ طَغَىٰ وَآثَرَ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا (then for the one who had rebelled, and preferred the worldly life [to the Hereafter]...79:38). In other words, [1] instead of remaining loyal to Allah and His Messenger and following their commands, they adopt the line of rejection and rebellion; and [2] prefer the life of this world to that of the Hereafter. In other words, if he were to do a deed that gives comfort and pleasure in this world but punishment in the Hereafter, he would prefer the comforts and pleasure of this life to the pleasure of the next life. Those who are characterised by these two qualities the Blazing Fire, that is Hell, will be their abode, thus: فَإِنَّ الْجَحِيمَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ (the Hell will be the abode...79:39).

Thereafter, the special marks of the inmates of Paradise are described. They too have two characteristics:

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَىٰ النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ (whereas for the one who feared to stand before his Lord, and restrained his self from the [evil] desire, 79:40). In other words, [1] the first characteristic of a God-fearing person is that, in this life, he shudders at the thought of appearing before Allah to account for his deeds on the Day of Reckoning; and [2] forbids the baser self from its evil desires. Those who are characterised by these two qualities have the good news that the Paradise will be their abode, thus: فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ (the Paradise will be the abode....79:41)

Three Levels of Suppressing [the Base] Self

The verse under comment lays down two conditions of attaining the abode in Paradise, but carefully considered, the two conditions, in terms of consequence, are one. The first condition is the fear of accountability in

the presence of Allah. The second condition is to restrain oneself from the evil desires. As a matter of fact, fear of Allah causes one to restrain oneself from evil desires. Qāḍī Thanā‘ullah Pānipatī has written in his Tafsīr Maḥzarī that there are three levels of suppressing evil desires, as follows:

The first level is that one avoids false beliefs which are in conflict or incompatible with express texts [of the Holy Qur‘ān and established Sunnah] and consensus of [the righteous] predecessors. In this level, a person deserves to be called 'Sunnī Muslim'.

The second level is the middle one. A person, in this stage, may think of committing sin. Then he may remember that he has to account for his deeds before Allah [on the Day of Reckoning]. As a result, he abandons the thought of committing sin. The complement to this level is that one abstains from doubtful things and those acts that are permissible in themselves, but there is apprehension that if committed, they may lead one to slip into impermissible acts. Sayyidnā Nu‘mān Ibn Bashīr ؓ narrates that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "He who abstained from doubtful things has protected his honour and religion. He who indulged in doubtful things will eventually indulge in forbidden things." The expression 'doubtful things' signifies those acts about which one is not certain whether they are permissible or not, both possibilities being equal. Let us consider a few examples: if a person is ill and can take [wet] ablution, but he is not sure whether taking [wet] ablution in this state would be harmful. Thus the permissibility of dry ablution (*tayammum*) becomes doubtful. Likewise a person is able to perform prayers in a standing position, but feels great difficulty. He is now in doubt whether or not it is permissible for him to perform prayers in a sitting position. On such occasions, one should abandon the doubtful thing or act, and prefer what is definitely certain. This is *taqwa* and the middle course of suppressing the selfish desires.

Tricks of the Base Self

There are acts whose sinful nature is obvious to every one. The selfish desires prompting to such sinful acts may be suppressed by one's deliberate efforts and firm resolution. However, there are evils prompted by one's base self even during his acts of worship and other good deeds, such as self-conceit, (*‘Ujb*) vanity, (*Kibr*), and show off (*Riyā’*). These are such sins whose sinful nature is often not discoverable to a common

person, still they are very severe and firmly ingrained evil desires of one's base self. One is at times deceived by them, because he continues to think that his actions are right. It is extremely necessary that first and foremost this lower self must be suppressed. But this cannot be achieved by one on his own. It is necessary for one to search for a perfect spiritual master (*Ash-shaikhul-kāmīl*), and hand himself over to him for guidance. He acts as the authentic guide and the only one to whom a seeker of Truth should turn in his quest and follow his advice. In turning to the spiritual master, the seeker is turning to Allah Almighty. The *shaikh* engages him in the spiritual struggle and endeavour [*mujāhadah*] against the passions and tendencies of the lower self [*'uyūb-un-nafs*].

Shaikh Imām Ya'qūb Karkhī رحمه الله تعالى says that in his young age he was a carpenter. He found laziness, and felt darkness in his inner self. So, he intended to keep fasts for a few days so that he may get rid of the laziness and darkness. Co-incidentally, one day, while he was fasting, he went up to Shaikh Imām Bahā'uddīn Naqshbandī. The Shaikh called for meals for his guests. He was also invited to partake of the meal, and the Shaikh said: "He is a very bad slave who is the slave of his base self that misleads him. It is better to partake of meal than to keep fast with evil desires of the base self." Shaikh Karkhī says that at that moment he realised that (by fasting) he was falling prey to self-complacency, self-conceit and pride, which the Shaikh Naqshbandī perceived. On that occasion, Shaikh Karkhī realised that a spiritual master's permission and guidance is needed to take up an optional act of worship, because the spiritual master is aware of the hidden tricks of the evil desires of the base self. If an optional act of worship will be accompanied by such motives, the will put a stop to it [for remedial purposes]. He asked Shaikh Naqshbandī: "If I cannot find a Shaikh who is called in Ṣūfī terms as *fānī fillah* and *bāqī billah*, (the explanation is coming in the next paragraph.) what must I do?" He replied: "Recite *istighfār* abundantly and recite *istighfār* [seek Allah's pardon] twenty times regularly after every prayer, so that it works out to a hundred times reciting it five times a day." The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said: "Sometimes I feel my heart disturbed, and I recite *istighfār* [seek Allah's pardon] a hundred times a day."

The third and the highest level of suppression of the base self is that

by abundant *dhikrullah* [remembrance of Allah] and constant *mujāhadah* [spiritual struggle and endeavour against the evil passions] and *riyāḍah* [ascetic discipline], one's self (*nafs*) is so much cleansed and purified that the desires that tempts him to evil are totally eliminated. This is the special stage of *wilāyah* [Divine friendship], which in Ṣūfī Terminology is called *fānī fillah* and *bāqī billah*. The Qur‘ān says regarding such people [addressing the Satan]:

إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطٰنٌ

'My servants are such that you have no power over them
[15:42]'

The following Tradition applies to the same category of *walī*:

لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَكُونَ هَوَاهُ تَبَعًا لِمَا جِئْتُ بِهِ

'None of you can be a [perfect] believer unless his [base] desires of self follow my teachings.'

Towards the end of the Sūrah, the Holy Qur‘ān responds to the *mala fide* demand of the infidels that the Holy Prophet ﷺ should let them know the exact date and time of the Day of Judgement. They are told that knowledge of the time and date is within Allah's own special prerogative. Allah's consummate wisdom did not pass the information to any angel or Prophet عليهم السلام. Therefore, the demand is futile.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah An-Nāzi‘āt
Ends here

Sūrah 'Abas

(Frowning)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 42 verses and 1 section.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 42

عَبَسَ وَتَوَلَّى ﴿١﴾ أَنْ جَاءَهُ الْأَعْمَى ﴿٢﴾ وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّهُ يَزَكَّى ﴿٣﴾
 أَوْ يَذَّكَّرُ فَتَنْفَعَهُ الذِّكْرَى ﴿٤﴾ أَمَّا مَنِ اسْتَغْنَى ﴿٥﴾ فَإِنَّ لَهُ
 تَصَدَّى ﴿٦﴾ وَمَا عَلَيْكَ أَلَّا يَزَكَّى ﴿٧﴾ وَأَمَّا مَنْ جَاءَكَ يَسْعَى ﴿٨﴾
 وَهُوَ يَخْشَى ﴿٩﴾ فَإِنَّ عَنْهُ تَلَهَّى ﴿١٠﴾ كَلَّا إِنَّهَا تَذْكِرَةٌ ﴿١١﴾
 فَمَنْ شَاءَ ذَكَرْهُ ﴿١٢﴾ فِي صُحُفٍ مُكَرَّمَةٍ ﴿١٣﴾ مَرْفُوعَةٍ مُطَهَّرَةٍ ﴿١٤﴾
 بِأَيْدِي سَفَرَةٍ ﴿١٥﴾ كِرَامٍ بَرَرَةٍ ﴿١٦﴾ قَتَلَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا اكْفَرَ ﴿١٧﴾
 مِنْ آيِ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ ﴿١٨﴾ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ خَلَقَهُ فَقَدَرَهُ ﴿١٩﴾ ثُمَّ
 السَّبِيلَ يَسْرَهُ ﴿٢٠﴾ ثُمَّ أَمَاتَهُ فَأَقْبَرَهُ ﴿٢١﴾ ثُمَّ إِذَا شَاءَ أَنْشَرَهُ ﴿٢٢﴾
 كَلَّا لَمَّا يَقْضِ مَا أَمَرَهُ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ إِلَى طَعَامِهِ ﴿٢٤﴾
 أَنَّا صَبَبْنَا الْمَاءَ صَبًّا ﴿٢٥﴾ ثُمَّ شَقَقْنَا الْأَرْضَ شَقًّا ﴿٢٦﴾ فَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا
 حَبًّا ﴿٢٧﴾ وَعَبَا وَقَضْبًا ﴿٢٨﴾ وَزَيْتُونًا وَنَخْلًا ﴿٢٩﴾ وَحَدَائِقِ غُلْبًا ﴿٣٠﴾
 وَفَاكِهَةً وَأَبًّا ﴿٣١﴾ مَتَاعًا لَكُمْ وَلِأَنْعَامِكُمْ ﴿٣٢﴾ فَإِذَا جَاءَتِ
 الصَّاحَةُ ﴿٣٣﴾ يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ الْمَرْءُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَأُمِّهِ وَأَبِيهِ ﴿٣٥﴾

وَصَاحِبَتِهِ وَبَيْنِهِ ﴿٣٦﴾ لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مِّنْهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ شَأْنٌ يُغْنِيهِ
 ﴿٣٧﴾ وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ مُّسْفِرَةٌ ﴿٣٨﴾ ضَاحِكَةٌ مُّسْتَبْشِرَةٌ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَوُجُوهٌ
 يَوْمَئِذٍ عَلَيْهَا غَبَرَةٌ ﴿٤٠﴾ تَرْهَقُهَا قَتَرَةٌ ﴿٤١﴾ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكُفْرَةُ
 الْفَجَرَةُ ﴿٤٢﴾

He (the Holy Prophet ﷺ) frowned and turned his face, [1] because the blind man came to him! [2] And what could tell you (O Holy Prophet about the prospects of the blind man?) May be, (if you had attended him properly,) he would have attained purity, [3] or have taken to the advice, and the advice would have benefited him. [4] As for the one who does not care (about faith), [5] you are anxious to pursue him, [6] while there is no blame on you, if he does not attain purity. [7] As regards the one who has come to you rushing eagerly, [8] while he fears (Allah), [9] to him you pay no heed! [10]

Never! (you should never act in this way,) Indeed this (Qur'an) is an advice. [11] So, whoever so wills, let him remember it. [12] It is (recorded) in those scripts (of the Preserved Tablet) that are honoured, [13] exalted, purified, [14] in the hands of those scribes [15] who are honourable, righteous. [16]

Death be unto the man! How ungrateful he is! [17] From which stuff did He (Allah) create him? [18] From a drop of semen! He created him, and designed him in due proportion, [19] then He made the way easy for him, [20] Later, he made him die, and put him into the grave, [21] thereafter, when He will intend, He will raise him up. [22] No! He has not yet fulfilled what He (Allah) had commanded him. [23]

So, let the man look to his food, [24] how well We poured water, [25] then how nicely We split the earth, [26] then We grew in it grain, [27] and grapes and greens, [28] and olive and date-palms, [29] and gardens, full of thick trees, [30] and fruits and fodder, [31] as a benefit for you and your cattle. [32]

So when there will come the Deafening Noise, [33] the Day when one will flee from his brother, [34] and from his mother and father, [35] and from his wife and sons, [36] every one of them will have enough concern to make

him careless of others. [37] Many faces, on that day, will be bright, [38] laughing, rejoicing, [39] and many faces, on that day, will be stained with dust, [40] covered by darkness. [41] Those are the disbelievers, the nefarious. [42]

Commentary

Circumstance of Revelation

Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Umm Maktūm ؓ, the companion of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was a blind man. It once happened that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was engaged in a talk with the leaders of Quraish about some matters of belief. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Umm Maktūm ؓ arrived there. Imam Baghawi adds that being blind and unable to see the surroundings, he did not realise that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was occupied with the others. He, therefore, burst into the circle and called the Holy Prophet ﷺ repeatedly. [Maẓharī]. According to Ibn Kathīr, he requested the Holy Prophet ﷺ to teach him a verse of the Qur'ān and insisted an immediate enlightenment on the question. On that occasion, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was occupied with the non-believing leaders of Makkah in the hope that they would embrace the faith of Islam. The leaders to whom the Holy Prophet ﷺ was speaking were 'Utbah Ibn Rabī'ah, Abū Jahl Ibn Hishām and the Holy Prophet's ؓ uncle 'Abbās ؓ [who had until then not embraced the Islamic faith].

The Holy Prophet ﷺ disliked the intrusion, and showed his displeasure by turning aside from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Umm Maktūm, thinking that he was a committed Muslim who frequently visited him, and therefore he could speak to him at another appropriate time. There was no religious loss in postponing the response to him. On the other hand, the Quraish leaders neither frequented the Holy Prophet's ؓ company, nor could the Word of Allah be conveyed to them at any time. At that particular moment, they were listening to the Holy Prophet's ؓ discourse and there was hope that they would embrace the Islamic faith. But if the conversation was rashly interrupted, apparently they would have been deprived of the faith. In view of this situation, the Holy Prophet ﷺ showed adverse reaction by turning aside from 'Abdullāh Ibn umm Maktūm ؓ, and continued his discourse with the Quraish leaders. When the assembly broke up, the verses of Sūrah 'Abas were revealed to record Allah's dislike for this attitude, and to give directions for future.

This attitude of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was based on *ijtihad* or 'an

opinion based on personal reasoning'. He thought that if a Muslim were to adopt a speech style that is not in keeping with etiquettes of a gathering, he needs to be reprimanded, so that in future he may be careful in future. That is the reason why Holy Prophet ﷺ turned his face away from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Umm Maktūm. Secondly, disbelief (*kufr*) and polytheism (*shirk*) are the most severe sins, and an effort to eradicate them should take priority over the subsidiary precepts of Islam on which Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Umm Maktūm asked for enlightenment. Allah Almighty, through this Surah, did not confirm the correctness of this *ijtihad* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and explained to him that educating a genuine seeker will most certainly benefit him, while the benefit of discussion with the opponents (who disdainfully turn away their face when the Holy Prophet ﷺ talks to them) is shaky and doubtful. Doubtful thing cannot be preferred over certainty. As for the violation of etiquette committed by Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn Umm Maktūm, its excuse is pointed out by the Holy Qur'ān in the word 'blind'. It is indicated by this word that being a blind man, he could not see what the Holy Prophet ﷺ was doing and with whom he was engaged in conversation. Thus he was excusable, and was not liable to be subjected to aversion. This indicates that if an excusable person were to break any rule of etiquette unwittingly, he should not be reprimanded.

عَبَسَ وَتَوَلَّى (He [the Holy Prophet ﷺ] frowned and turned his face, 80:1). The word '*abasa*' means 'he frowned' and the word '*tawallā*' means 'he turned aside'. Since the reference here is to the Holy Prophet ﷺ who himself is addressed, the verbs should have been in the second person: 'you frowned and you turned aside'. But the Holy Qur'ān on this occasion uses the third person in order to maintain the honour of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, as if this attitude were shown by some other person, and in a subtle way it alludes to the point that what the Holy Prophet ﷺ did was not befitting his high status. Then the next sentence وَمَا يَذْرَئُكَ (and what could tell you? ...80:3) alludes to the fact that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was excusable, because it did not come to his attention that the Companion is asking something whose effect will be certain and the effect of conversation with others is dubious. The second sentence abandons the third person, and switches to the second person in order to maintain the

honour of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Had he not been addressed in second person at all, it might have created the impression that he is not addressed directly because of his unapproved conduct, which would have been an unbearable pain and grief for the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Just as the third person in the first statement is meant to show respect to him, the second person in the following sentence is also meant to honor and console him.

لَعَلَّهٗ يَرْحَمَہٗ اَوْ يَذَّكَّرُ فَتَنْفَعُہُ الذِّکْرٰی (May be, [if you had attended him properly,] he would have attained purity, or have taken to the advice, and the advice would have benefited him....80:4).

In other words, because Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Umm Maktūm ؓ was a genuine believer, any advice given to him would have benefited him and served to purify him. The companion sought enlightenment and its benefit was certain. If the Holy Prophet ﷺ enlightened him on the topic, he would have purified himself and attained perfection. If that did not happen, he would have at least attained the basic benefit of Divine remembrance. He would have improved the love and fear of Allah in his heart. The word *dhikrā* means 'to remember Allah abundantly' [Ṣiḥāḥ].⁽¹⁾

On this occasion, the Qur'ān has used two sentences *yazzakkā* and *yazzakkaru*. The first statement signifies 'to be purified' and the second statement signifies 'he may take heed and the reminder may benefit him'. The first stage is that of the 'righteous' who cleanse their inner and outer selves. The second stage is that of *mubtadī* 'beginners on the spiritual journey'. At this stage, the beginner is reminded of Allah which enhances the greatness and awe of Allah in his heart. The two sentences are disjoined by disjunctive particles *au* (or) and technically they are not necessarily exclusive to one another. The sense is that 'Abdullāh Ibn Umm Maktūm ؓ would have attained either both benefits, or at least, the second one, that is, increase in Allah's remembrance and in His awe, which is the initial step towards perfection [Maẓharī]

An Important Qur'ānic Principle of Teaching and Preaching

On this occasion, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was faced with two different

(1) This interpretation is based on taking the word '*dhikrā*' in the sense of remembrance of Allah'. However, some other exegetes have taken this word to mean 'advice', and the translation of the text, as well as the explanation following in the next paragraph, is based on it. (Muḥammad Taqī Usmānī)

requirements at the same time. On the one hand, he was required to teach a Muslim and to encourage him on attaining perfection. On the other hand, he had to provide guidance to non-Muslims. The principle laid down here makes it clear that the first requirement takes priority over the second one. It is improper to delay the first task (educating Muslims) because of the second task. This indicates that education of Muslims and their reform are more important than, and take priority over, getting the non-Muslims to embrace the faith.

Scholars should avoid any such indulgence when disposing of any doubts of the non-Muslims, which may create doubts or complaints in the minds of the general body of Muslims. The teachers, preachers and reformers need to keep in mind these Qur'anic guidelines to maintain the welfare and priority of the Muslims. How beautifully Akbar Allahabadi, the Urdu poet, versifies this principle:

بے وفا سمجھیں تمہیں اہل حرم اس سے بچو..... ذیروالے کج ادا کہدیں یہ بدنامی بھلی

'Protect yourselves from a position where people of the Haram (Muslims) call you unfaithful.

As opposed to this, if People of temple [non-Muslims] call you 'ill-mannered', (because of your faithfulness to your religion), this dishonor is better.

The following verses clarify the principles more elaborately:

أَمَّا مَنِ اسْتَغْنَىٰ فَأَنَّىٰ لَهُ تَصَدَّىٰ (As for the one who does not care [about faith], you are anxious to pursue him!...80:6).

In other words: "Those who turn away from you and your religion, you are pursuing them under the hope that some how they should become Muslims, while this is not your responsibility. If they do not embrace the faith, there will be no blame on you.

Thereafter, in verses 13 and 14, Allah Almighty has described the high status of the Holy Qur'an, thus:

فِي صُحُفٍ مُّكَرَّمَةٍ مَّرْفُوعَةٍ مُّطَهَّرَةٍ (It is [recorded] in those scripts [of the Preserved Tablet] that are honoured, [13] exalted, purified - 14).

The word *ṣuḥuf* refers to *lauḥ mahfūẓ* 'the Preserved Tablet'.

Although it is a single thing, but *ṣuḥuf*, the plural form of *ṣaḥīfah* is used because all divine scriptures are written in it, or because the angels copy their scriptures from them. The word *marfū'ah* means 'exalted in the sight of Allah'. The word *muṭahharah* (purified) means 'people in the state of sexual defilement, menstrual discharge, post-natal bleeding and people in the state of minor uncleanness are not permitted to touch it'.

بِأَيْدِي سَفَرَةٍ. كِرَامٍ بَرَرَةٍ (in the hands of those scribes who are honourable, righteous. [80:15-16])

The word *safarah*, with *fathah* [=a+a] on the first two letters, may be the plural of *safir* which means a 'scribe'. In this case, it would refer to the recording angels, or to the Prophets عليهم السلام and those of their aides who write down the revelation. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ and Mujāhid hold this view.

The word *safarah* may be used as the plural of *safir* in the sense of 'envoy'. In this case, it would refer to the angels who convey the revelation, and Prophets عليهم السلام and their companions who write the revelation. The 'ulama' (knowledgeable persons) of the Muslim community' are also included in this term, because they too are envoys between the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the Muslim community. The messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said that he who recites the Qurān and is an expert in the art of recitation, he will be with the honorable, righteous envoys. He who is not an expert in the art of recitation, but recites it correctly with difficulty, he shall receive double reward. [Transmitted by Shaikhain from 'Ā'ishah - Mazharī]. This shows that a non-expert will receive double reward - one for recitation of Qurān, and the other for bearing the difficulty. This also indicates that an expert will receive countless rewards. [Mazharī]

The preceding verses mentioned that the Qurān is exalted and that belief in it is incumbent. Subsequently, the rejecters of Qurān are cursed and they are warned against showing ingratitude towards Divine favours. That the Holy Qur'an is a great Divine blessing is understood only by the men of Divine knowledge and understanding. Further, there is the mention of those Divine favours that Allah confers on man since his inception to the end of his life. These are material and physical things

that a man with basic intellect can understand. Human creation is mentioned, thus:

مِنْ أَيْ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ. مِنْ نَظْفَةٍ (From which stuff did He [Allah] create him? From a drop of semen! ..80:18-19).

First a question is raised: 'O man! Consider what Allah has created you from?' Since its reply is so obvious that there can be no other reply, the next verse itself says: 'From a drop of semen!' Thus the verse draws pointed attention to the very humble beginning of man, so that it may be brought home to him that Allah having created him from such an insignificant thing as a sperm-drop, created him and proportioned him:

خَلَقَهُ، فَقَدَرَهُ (He created him, and designed him in due proportion..80:19). In other words, He has made him with a special design and with great wisdom. His stature, body-structure, his face, his length and breadth of the limbs, his joints, his eyes, nose and ears are all well-proportioned in their creation. If any limb or organ loses its proportion, man's face will go awry, and every activity will become a problem.

The word *qaddara* is derived from *taqdīr* which is also used in the sense of 'predestination'. Taking the word in this sense, the verse may also mean here that when man is under creation in his mother's womb, Allah predetermines four things for him: his life span, his sustenance, his deeds and whether he would be miserable or happy [as in the ḥadīth of Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه recorded by Shaikhain].

ثُمَّ السَّبِيلَ يَسَّرَهُ (then He made the way easy for him...80:20) Allah through His consummate wisdom creates man in his mother's womb, creation after creation, within three layers of darkness [i.e. the belly, the womb and the amniotic membrane]. It is kept in a safe place in the belly. The mother in whose belly all this is happening is totally unaware of any of the details of this process. Thereafter, when the baby becomes perfect with all its limbs and organs, Allah made it possible that a body weighing 3 to 4 kg comes out through an extremely narrow passage, and the mother does not suffer unduly. So blessed be He Who is the best Creator!

ثُمَّ أَمَاتَهُ، فَأَقْبَرَهُ (Later, he made him die, and put him into the grave..80:21) After mentioning the inception of human life, Allah points to its end, that is, death and grave. Death has been mentioned here in the context of

blessings of Allah. It indicates that death is a blessing rather than a calamity. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have put it thus: تحفة المومن الموت "The gift of a believer is death." Moreover, there is a profound wisdom in death at macro level for the entire world.

The phrase فاقبره *fa-aqbarah* (and put him into the grave) describes another blessing of Allah, in that when man is dead, he is not left lying on the earth like other animals where he might rot, blow up and burst [and probably be ravaged by vultures or beasts]. But, even after death, he is honoured in the most befitting manner. His body is washed ceremonially, enshrouded in clean cloths, and buried in a grave with respect.

This verse also indicates that it is obligatory to bury a dead human body.

كَلَّا لَمَّا يُقْضَىٰ مَا أَمَرَهُ (No! He has not yet fulfilled what He [Allah] had commanded him...80:23).

Having mentioned in the preceding verses the beginning and the end of human life, Divine Omnipotence and Divine blessings, the current verses warn the non-believing man that the demand of Divine Signs and blessings was to carefully ponder and believe in Allah, and comply with His injunctions, but the unfortunate creature failed to do so. Further, the Divine favours are mentioned that were conferred on man between the beginning and end of his life. Man is then asked to consider the sources of his food. Allah showers down water abundantly from the clouds. He cleaves the earth with new growth. Thereupon He causes grain to grow out of it. At first, a fragile shoot germinates and sprouts. Then many different kinds of grain, fruits and gardens come into existence. Having warned man several times about these Divine blessings, the Sūrah concludes with the mention of Resurrection, thus:

فَإِذَا جَاءَتِ الصَّاحَّةُ (So when there will come the Deafening Noise...80:33). The word *ṣākhkhah* means 'deafening cry or shout' and it refers to the blowing of the trumpet, which will be a deafening sound.

يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ الْمَرْءُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ (the Day when one will flee from his brother...80:34). This depicts the scene when all the people will have gathered in the Plain of Gathering. Each person will be worried about himself, and the

situation will be so horrifying and tense that it will make people heedless of anything around them. In the world, there are relationships between people that make one willing to lay down his life for the other, but on the Day of Resurrection there will be such horror and chaos that they will be unable to take care of anyone. In fact, even if one sees the other in front of him, he will turn away from him. They will try to flee from their brothers, from their mothers and fathers, from their spouses and their children. They will not be able to help any of them in the Hereafter, despite the natural attachment they had with them in the world. Normally, one is more anxious in this world about his parents than about his brothers, and he is more anxious about his wife and children than about his parents. Keeping this in view, the relationships, in the present verse, are arranged from lower order to higher order.

The Chapter ends on a note of warning to disbelievers that if they reject the Qur’ānic message and persist in opposition to the Holy Prophet ﷺ they will have to face a day of reckoning when misery, shame and ignominy will be their lot. The righteous believers, however, will reside in Gardens of Bliss, their faces beaming with joy and happiness.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah ‘Abas
Ends here

Sūrah At-Takwīr (The Folding)

This Sūrah is Makki, and it has 29 verses and one sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 29

إِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ ﴿١﴾ وَإِذَا النُّجُومُ انْكَدَرَتْ ﴿٢﴾ وَإِذَا الْجِبَالُ
 سُيِّرَتْ ﴿٣﴾ وَإِذَا الْعِشَارُ عُطِّلَتْ ﴿٤﴾ وَإِذَا الْوُحُوشُ حُشِرَتْ ﴿٥﴾
 وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ سُجِّرَتْ ﴿٦﴾ وَإِذَا النُّفُوسُ زُوِّجَتْ ﴿٧﴾ وَإِذَا
 الْمَوْءُودَةُ سُئِلَتْ ﴿٨﴾ بِأَيِّ ذَنْبٍ قُتِلَتْ ﴿٩﴾ وَإِذَا الصُّحُفُ
 نُشِرَتْ ﴿١٠﴾ وَإِذَا السَّمَاءُ كُشِطَتْ ﴿١١﴾ وَإِذَا الْجَحِيمُ سُعِّرَتْ ﴿١٢﴾
 وَإِذَا الْجَنَّةُ أُزْلِفَتْ ﴿١٣﴾ عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّا أَحْضَرَتْ ﴿١٤﴾
 فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالْخَنَسِ ﴿١٥﴾ الْجَوَارِ الْكُنَسِ ﴿١٦﴾ وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا عَسْعَسَ ﴿١٧﴾
 وَالصُّبْحِ إِذَا تَنَفَّسَ ﴿١٨﴾ إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ رَسُولٍ كَرِيمٍ ﴿١٩﴾ ذِي قُوَّةٍ
 عِنْدَ ذِي الْعَرْشِ مَكِينٍ ﴿٢٠﴾ مُطَاعٍ ثَمَّ أَمِينٍ ﴿٢١﴾ وَمَا صَاحِبُكُمْ
 بِمَجْنُونٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ رَآهُ بِالْأُفُقِ الْمُبِينِ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَمَا هُوَ عَلَى الْغَيْبِ
 بِضَنِينٍ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَمَا هُوَ بِقَوْلِ شَيْطَانٍ رَجِيمٍ ﴿٢٥﴾ فَأَيْنَ تَذْهَبُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾
 إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾ لِمَنْ شَاءَ مِنْكُمْ أَنْ يَسْتَقِيمَ ﴿٢٨﴾
 وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

When the sun will be folded up, [1] and when the stars will swoop down, [2] and when the mountains will be set in motion, [3] and when the ten-months pregnant she-camels will be abandoned, [4] and when the wild beasts will be gathered together, [5] and when the seas will be flared up, [6] and when the people will be arranged in categories, [7] and when the girl-child that was buried alive will be asked, [8] for what sin she was killed, [9] and when the scrolls (of deeds) will be unrolled, [10] and when the sky will be stripped off, [11] and when the Hell will be set ablaze, [12] and when the Paradise will be brought close, [13] then everyone will know what he (or she) has put forward, [14]

So, I swear by those (stars) that recede, [15] that proceed, that withdraw from the scene, [16] and by the night when it departs, [17] and the morning when it starts breathing, [18] it (the Qur'ān) is surely the word of a noble messenger (Jibra'īl عليه السلام), [19] the one possessing power, and a high status with the Lord of the Throne, [20] the one obeyed there, trusted. [21] And your companion (Muhammad ﷺ) is not a madman. [22] And he did see him (Jibra'īl عليه السلام) on the clear horizon. [23] And he (the Prophet ﷺ) is not stingy about (the news of) the unseen. [24] Nor is it the word of an outcast satan (devil). [25] Then where are you going? [26] It is nothing else but a message of advice for all the worlds, [27] for the benefit of any one from among you who intends to go straight. [28] And you cannot intend (to do anything) unless it is so intended by Allah, the Lord of all the worlds. [29]

Commentary

إِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ (When the sun will be folded up...81:1) The word *kawwara* is derived from *Takwīr* which denotes for the sun 'to lose its light'.¹ Sayyidnā Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى has attached this interpretation to it. Another sense of the word is 'to cause to fall'. Rabi' Ibn Khaitham assigns the following interpretation to this verse: The Sun will be thrown into the ocean, and as a result of its heat the entire ocean will turn into fire. The two interpretations are not contradictory. They may be reconciled thus: first, its light will be put off and then it may be thrown

(1) Another meaning of *Takwīr* is 'to fold', and the translation in the text is based on this meaning. The sense of folding the sun is that its function will come to an end, and it will lose its light. As such, it comes to mean same thing as mentioned in first interpretation. Muhammad Taqi Usmani

into the ocean. Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī records from Sayyidnā Abū Huharirah رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that on the Day of Resurrection the Sun and the Moon would be thrown into the ocean. Musnad of Bazzār has the addition that they will be thrown into Hell. Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn Abid-Dunyā and Abush-Shaikh stated that on the Day of Resurrection Allah will throw the Sun, the Moon and all stars into the ocean. Then a violent wind will blow over them, as a result of which the entire ocean will turn into fire. Thus it is correct to say that the Sun and the Moon will be put into the ocean. It is likewise correct to say that they will be put into Hell, because the entire ocean at that time will have been turned into Hell. [Derived from Maḏharī and Qurtubī]

وَإِذَا النُّجُومُ انْكَدَرَتْ (and when the stars will swoop down...81:2). The word *inkadarat* is derived from *inkidār* and it denotes 'to fall'. The righteous predecessors have interpreted it thus. It signifies that all the stars from the sky will fall into the oceans as explained in the preceding verses.

وَإِذَا الْعِشَارُ عُطِّلَتْ (and when the ten-months pregnant she-camels will be abandoned...81:4). The Arabic word '*ishār*' is the plural of the word '*usharā*' and is applied to she-camels having ten months pregnancy. Such she-camels were considered by the Arabs to be a very valuable asset, because they expected her to give birth to more camels and abundant milk. As such, they used to protect her and never left her free. The verse referring to this custom of the Arabs, who were the immediate addressees, depicts the horrible scene of the Doomsday when even the most favorite wealth, like such a she-camel, will be abandoned and neglected by its owners because of the calamity they will be facing.

وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ سُجِّرَتْ (and when the seas will be flared up...81:6). The word *sujjirat* is derived from *tasjīr* and it signifies 'to set ablaze'. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه assigns this interpretation to the word in this context. Another sense of the word is 'to fill' and a third sense of the word is 'to mix or admix'. Some commentators have interpreted it in this sense. None of these interpretations is contradictory to each other. First, the salt and sweet water are admixed and the rivers are made to flow forth into the sea; then the seas will meet together and become one and having more water; then the seas will be set on fire; and then the Sun and the Moon and the stars will be thrown into the water. Then all the water will be turned into fire which will become part of Hell. [Maḏharī]

وَإِذَا النُّفُوسُ زُوِّجَتْ (and when the people will be arranged in categories...81:7). It means that the people on the Plain of Gathering will be grouped, like with like, in terms of belief and deeds. Disbelievers will be grouped together and believers will be grouped together. There are differences between the deeds and habits of believers and there are differences between the deeds and habits of disbelievers. The non-believers will be re-grouped according to their essential characteristics and the Muslims too will be re-grouped according to their essential characteristics as is reported in Baihaqī on the authority of Sayyidnā Nu'mān Ibn Bashīr رضي الله عنه that Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه said that the people doing similar deeds, good or bad, will be joined together. For example, the knowledgeable persons from among the Muslims who were serving Islamic studies will be made into one group; the people who devoted themselves for worship will be made into another group; the people performing *jihād* will be together, and the people whose main characteristic was to spend in charities will be gathered in one place. On the other hand, those who were involved in wicked activities like thieves, robbers, adulterers will also be assembled in their respective groups. Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه based this statement on the verse of the Holy Qur'ān in which Allah says in Sūrah Al-Wāqī'ah: وَكُنْتُمْ أَزْوَاجًا ثَلَاثَةً [and you will be (divided into) three categories. (56:7) It is mentioned further in that Sūrah that out of the three categories, two will attain salvation who are named as the 'foremost' and 'people of the right' while another group, namely the 'people of the left' will be comprised of the infidels.

وَإِذَا الْمَوْءُودَةُ سُئِلَتْ (and when the girl-child that was buried alive will be asked, for what sin she was killed...81:8-9) The word *mau'ūdah* is the girl-child buried alive. It was a common practice in pre-Islamic time of ignorance that people would take the birth of a girl as a matter of shame for their fathers, and therefore they would bury them alive as soon as they were born. Islam has abolished this barbaric practice completely. This verse, while depicting the scene of Resurrection, mentions that the girls who were buried alive will be questioned for what crime they were killed. Apparently, it seems that the question will be posed to the girl herself. This will give the victim an opportunity to prove her complete innocence and thus the perpetrators of this crime will be hauled up in the Divine Court of Justice, and will be duly punished for their wrongdoing.

It is also possible that the question will be posed to the killers of the girls why they committed infanticide.

Important Note

In any case, one question may arise here: The day referred to in these verses is named as the 'Day of Requital' and the 'Day of Judgement'. This name itself sows that every person, on that day, will be put to a trial where he will be asked all sorts of questions about his deeds. Why has the Holy Qur'ān, at this place, singled out only the question asked about the girl that was buried alive. Carefully considered, it would appear that such a girl was the victim of the barbarism of her own parents. As such, there was no one to raise a plaint against such a brutal act, and to demand retaliation, especially when she was buried secretly with no evidence left. The verse, therefore, signifies that on the Day of Reckoning, even those criminals will be exposed and hauled up in the Divine Court of Justice against whom there was no evidence, nor was there anyone who could stand up on their behalf to demand justice. Allah knows best!

Abortion After Four Months is Tantamount to Infanticide

Ruling [1]

Burying alive infants or killing them is a major sin and a heinous brutality. Aborting a foetus after four months falls under the same category in Shari'ah, because within four months the foetus receives the soul and treated as a living human being. Likewise, if a person strikes on the stomach of a pregnant woman which causes the baby to abort, then, according to the common consent of the Muslim jurists, it would be incumbent upon him to set free a slave or pay its price in blood-wit or *diyyah*. If the baby was alive at the time of aborting and then died, full *diyyah* will be incumbent. Abortion before four months is also unlawful, except in cases of necessity, but compared to the first case, it is a sin of lesser degree, because it does not amount to killing of a living human being clearly.

Ruling [2]: Birth Control

Birth control, whose many forms are invented today, is also termed by the Holy Prophet ﷺ as 'hidden infanticide' in a *ḥadīth* reported by Muslim from *Judhāmah* bint Wahb رضي الله عنه. There are, however, some *ahadith* in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have allowed '*azl* (coitus interruptus) or to have observed silence when asked about it,

which is a sign of permissibility of such an act. But it should be remembered that its permissibility is restricted to genuine needs, and that too in a way that productivity of the woman is not permanently blocked. [Maẓharī]. The present-day medical science has invented some measures that prevent pregnancy forever. The Shari'ah does not permit such measures under any circumstances. Allah knows best!

وَإِذَا السَّمَاءُ كُشِطَتْ (and when the sky will be stripped off...81:11) The word *kushiṭat* is derived from *kashṭ*, and it literally means 'to strip off' the skin of an animal. Probably, this condition will prevail at the first blowing of the Horn, which will happen in this world. The stars, the Sun and the Moon that contributed to the beauty of the sky will all lose their light and lustre and will be thrown into the ocean. The outlook of the sky will be changed. This phenomenon is termed in this verse as: 'The sky will be stripped off'. Some commentators interpret the word *kashṭ* in the sense of 'folding up'. The verse, according to them, purports to say that the sky that surrounds the upper atmosphere over our heads will be folded up.

عَلِمْتُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أَحْضَرْتُ (then everyone will know what he [or she] has put forward...81:14). It means that when Resurrection, with all the horrors mentioned above, will take place, man will realise what he has brought with him. The word 'what' here refers to his good and bad deeds, all of which will be in front of him, either in the form of the Record of Deeds that will be given in his hands or his deeds will assume a specific body shape as is understood from certain Traditions. Allah knows best!

Having described the horrors of Resurrection, and the accountability of deeds, Allah swears an oath by a few stars to confirm that the Qur'ān is the truth that has been sent down, fully protected from any interruption or distortion, and that the Prophet ﷺ who has received it is a great personality, and the angel (Jibra'īl عليه السلام) who descended with it was known to him before hand. Therefore, there can be no room for any doubt about its veracity. The verses here swear an oath by five stars which the ancient Greeks called *khamṣah mutahayyirah* or 'the five wandering stars', since they seemed to stray irregularly across the sky. At times they are seen moving from East to West, and at others, from West to East. Different reasons have been assigned to their irregular movements. The ancient Greeks hold several contradictory explanations for this. The research of modern scientists concurs with some of the ancient

philosophers, and differs from some others. The Creator alone knows the truth and reality. The scientists merely guess and conjecture which may be wrong. The Qur'ān has, therefore, not involved its readers in such a useless debate. Allah showed us what was beneficial, that is, to observe the Divine Omnipotence, His Consummate Wisdom and to repose our faith in Him.

إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ رَسُولٍ كَرِيمٍ. ذِي قُوَّةٍ عِنْدَ ذِي الْعَرْشِ مَكِينٍ (it [the Qur'ān] is surely the word of a noble messenger [Jibra'īl], the one possessing power and a high status with the Lord of the Throne...81:19-20). This is the subject of oath that affirms that Qur'ān is the word brought by a noble messenger. Then three qualities are attributed to this noble messenger. The first quality is that he possesses power. The second quality is that he has high status and lofty rank with Allah, and he is obeyed in the upper realm. The third quality is that he is trusted, and there is no possibility of his committing any breach of trust or tampering with the message he conveys. The word 'noble messenger' obviously refers to the angel Jibra'īl عليه السلام, because the word 'messenger' is used for angels as it is used for prophets, and all the three qualities attributed to the 'messenger' in the next verses are truly present in Jibra'īl عليه السلام. His being powerful is mentioned in Sūrah An-Najm in the following words;

عَلَّمَهُ شَدِيدُ الْقُوَى

It is taught to him by one (angel) of strong faculties.[53:5]

It is established through the *ḥadīth* of Mi'rāj that he is obeyed by other angels, because when he accompanied the Holy Prophet ﷺ to the sky and ordered the angels appointed on its doors to open them he was obeyed by them. That he is trust-worthy is too obvious to need a proof.

Some commentators, however, take the phrase 'honourable messenger' to refer to the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and accordingly have made an attempt to take all the three qualities referring to the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

In the next verses, the Holy Qur'ān has mentioned the high status of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and has refuted the silly objections raised against him by the infidels.

وَمَا صَاحِبُكُمْ بِمَجْنُونٍ (And your companion [Muḥammad ﷺ] is not a

madman....81:22) This is rebuttal to the foolish criticism of the enemies who said that Muḥammad ﷺ is [God forbid!] insane.

وَلَقَدْ رَأَاهُ بِالْأَفُقِ الْمُبِينِ (And he did see him [Jibra'īl عليه السلام] on the clear horizon. ...81:23) In other words, Muḥammad saw Jibra'īl عليه السلام on a clear horizon. A similar statement occurs in Sūrah An-Najm as follows:

وَهُوَ بِالْأَفُقِ الْأَعْلَى

while he was on the upper horizon....53:7)

The purpose of mentioning this is to show that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was well-acquainted with Jibra'īl عليه السلام, the angel of revelation. He had seen him in his original shape. Therefore, there can be no room for doubt in the veracity of revelation he brings to him.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah At-Takwīr
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Infiṭār (Cleaving)

This Sūrah is Makkī. and it has 19 verses.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 19

إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انْفَطَرَتْ ﴿١﴾ وَإِذَا الْكَوَاكِبُ انْتَثَرَتْ ﴿٢﴾ وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ
فُجِرَتْ ﴿٣﴾ وَإِذَا الْقُبُورُ بُعْثِرَتْ ﴿٤﴾ عَلِمْتَ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ وَأَخَّرَتْ
﴿٥﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ مَا غَرَّكَ بِرَبِّكَ الْكَرِيمِ ﴿٦﴾ الَّذِي خَلَقَكَ فَسَوِّدَكَ
فَعَدَلَكَ ﴿٧﴾ فِي أَيِّ صُورَةٍ مَّا شَاءَ رَكَّبَكَ ﴿٨﴾ كَلَّا بَلْ تُكَذِّبُونَ
بِالدِّينِ ﴿٩﴾ وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ لَحَافِظِينَ ﴿١٠﴾ كِرَامًا كَاتِبِينَ ﴿١١﴾ يَعْلَمُونَ
مَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿١٢﴾ إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ لَفِي نَعِيمٍ ﴿١٣﴾ وَإِنَّ الْفُجَّارَ لَفِي جَحِيمٍ
﴿١٤﴾ يَصْلَوْنَهَا يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ﴿١٥﴾ وَمَاهُمْ عَنْهَا بِغَائِبِينَ ﴿١٦﴾ وَمَا
أَدْرَاكَ مَا يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ﴿١٧﴾ ثُمَّ مَّا أَدْرَاكَ مَا يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ﴿١٨﴾ يَوْمَ لَا
تَمْلِكُ نَفْسٌ لِّنَفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَالْأَمْرُ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلَّهِ ﴿١٩﴾

When the sky will be cleft asunder, [1] and when the stars will disperse, [2] and when the seas will be burst forth, [3] and when the graves will be overturned, [4] then one will know what he sent ahead and what he left behind. [5] O man! What has deceived you about your Gracious Lord, [6] who created you, then perfected you, then brought you in due proportion? [7] He composed you in whichever form He willed. [8] Never! (i.e. one should never be heedless

towards him.) But you deny the Requital, [9] while (appointed) over you there are watchers, [10] who are noble, writers (of the deeds), [11] who know whatever you do. [12] Surely the righteous will be in bliss, [13] and surely the sinners will be in Hell, [14] in which they will enter on the Day of Requital, [15] and they will not (be able to) keep away from it. [16] And what may let you know what the Day of Requital is? [17] Again, what may let you know what the Day of Requital is? [18] A Day when no one will have power to do any thing for another! And all matters, on that Day, will belong to Allah (alone). [19]

Commentary

عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ وَأَخَّرَتْ (...then one will know what he sent ahead and what he left behind....82:5) In the preceding verses [1-4] of the Sūrah, Allah depicts the scene of the Day of Judgement that when the sky splits, the stars fall, the seas are poured forth [ie the fresh and salt water bodies will merge to form one mass of water] and the graves are overturned [ie corpses will emerge from their graves], every soul shall come to know what it had sent ahead and what it had left behind. The phrase 'what he sent ahead' means the good or evil act which he has done in his life; and the phrase 'what he left behind' means what he failed to do or refrained from doing. It is also possible that 'what he sent ahead' refers to the acts he has done himself, and 'what he left behind' refers to the acts one has not done himself, but he has laid down a custom in the society. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said: "If anyone establishes a good tradition in Islam, he will have a reward for it and the equivalent of the rewards of those who act upon it after him, without theirs being diminished in any respect; but he who establishes a bad custom in Islam will bear the responsibility of it and the responsibility of those who act upon it after him, without theirs being diminished in any respect." This subject was dealt with earlier under the following verse: يَبْنِئُ الْإِنْسَانُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِمَا قَدَّمَ وَأَخَّرَ 'Man will be informed of what he sent ahead and what he left behind. [53:13]'

يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ مَا غَرَّبَكَ (O man! What has deceived you about your Gracious Lord...82:6) The opening of the Sūrah mentions the violent events that will take place at the end of this worldly life, and the current set of verses reminds us of the inceptive stages of our creation. The sum total of the verses purport to say that if man had considered carefully, he would have believed in Allah and His Messenger, and he would not have deviated a

hair's breadth from Divine injunctions, but he slumped into heedlessness and forgetfulness. In the present verse, he is reprimanded by a rhetorical question and by means of gentle remonstrance as to what has lured him away from His Gracious Lord, and led him to disobedience, despite he knows his beginning, and he knows his end.

The verse further goes on to remind man of the inceptive stages of his creation. First, it says: خَلَقَكَ فَسَوَّىكَ (who created you, then perfected you, ...82:7). The sense is that not only did Allah create man, but He also perfected his creation and proportioned his body, limbs and organs. Every limb and organ is well placed. The body, height, length and breadth of every limb are kept in harmony, symmetry and balance. Any deviation from the symmetrical construction of the human body, the organs will become dysfunctional. Then the verse says: فَعَدَلَكَ (...then brought you in due proportion?...82:7). Man is granted such symmetry, harmony and balance that no other animal in the world is granted to that degree. Along with physical and physiological symmetry and harmony, he has been granted well-balanced disposition, despite the fact that man is made up of opposing humours – blood, phlegm, black bile and yellow bile. Some are hot and others are cold, and yet the perfect wisdom of Allah prepared a well-balanced disposition. Thereafter a third characteristic is mentioned as follows:

فِي أَيِّ صُورَةٍ مَّا شَاءَ رَكَّبَكَ (He composed you in whichever form He willed....82:8). This is to indicate that since the basic structure of all human beings is the same, it was expected that the zillions of members of the human society would have shared the same shape, size and features, but the perfect mastery and the wonderful acumen of the Supreme Creator has created them so differently that each one of them has its own unique features that make him clearly distinct from all others, and no one is confused with another.

Having stated the creative acumen of the Great Creator, the verse states: يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ مَا غَرَّبَكَ بِرَبِّكَ الْكَرِيمِ (O man! What has deceived you about your Gracious Lord,...82:6). Allah has endowed man with such natural faculties and abilities that every limb and every joint of his body was enough to remind him of His Creator, and to make him obedient. But he is lured away from his gracious Lord, has forgotten Him and disobeyed Him. The question is: How did he forget his Lord, how did he become

heedless of Him, and how is he lured away from his Lord? On this occasion, the adjective *karīm* (Gracious) used for the 'Lord' points to the answer. The reason for such an ungrateful attitude is that Allah is Gracious and does not punish man immediately after his committing a sin. Rather, his sustenance, welfare and well-being, and worldly comforts [and pleasures] are not curtailed. He misinterprets Allah's magnanimity, and thus falls into deception. If man were to think rationally, he would adopt a grateful attitude and obedient behaviour, rather than adopting an ungrateful attitude and impudent behaviour. Sayyidnā Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى says:

كَمْ مِنْ مَغْرُورٍ تَحْتَ السَّتْرِ وَهُوَ لَا يَشْعُرُ

'How many humans are there whose faults are put [by Allah] under cover, (i.e. He did not disgrace them), yet they do not appreciate (and are deluded by His grace).'

إِنَّ الْآبِرَارَ لَفِي نَعِيمٍ وَإِنَّ الْفُجَّارَ لَفِي جَحِيمٍ (Surely the righteous will be in bliss, and surely the sinners will be in Hell,...82:13-14) These two statements are connected with verse [5] above: 'عَلِمْتُ نَفْسًا مَّا قَدَّمْتُ وَأَخَّرْتُ' 'then one will know what he sent ahead and what he left behind. [5]'

The verse informs us that each person, on the Day of Reckoning, will know what he has done, and what will be the consequences of his deeds. The present verse says that the righteous will be in perfect bliss, while the sinners will be in a Blazing Fire of Hell.

وَمَا هُمْ عَنْهَا بِغَائِبِينَ (and they will not [be able to] keep away from it...82:16) The inmates of Hell will never be able to get away from it, because the torment will be eternal, as the concluding verse of the Surah asserts: يَوْمَ لَا تَمْلِكُ نَفْسٌ لِّنَفْسٍ شَيْئًا (A Day when no one [with his own free will in the Plain of Gathering] will have power to do any thing for another!). This does not negate intercession, because that will not happen with one's own free will, unless Allah grants permission to someone to intercede on someone's behalf, and then accepts the intercession. And all matters, on that Day, will belong to Allah (alone). [19]' Allah knows best!

Alhamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Infiṭār
Ends here

Sūrah At-Taṭfif (Curtailling the Rights)

Sūrah At-Taṭfif was revealed in Makkah It has 36 Verses and 1 Section.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 36

وَيْلٌ لِّلْمُطَفِّفِينَ ﴿١﴾ الَّذِينَ إِذَا اكْتَالُوا عَلَى النَّاسِ يَسْتَوْفُونَ ﴿٢﴾
وَأِذَا كَالُوهُمْ أَوْ وَزَنُوهُمْ يُخْسِرُونَ ﴿٣﴾ أَلَا يَظُنُّ أُولَٰئِكَ أَنَّهُمْ
مَبْعُوثُونَ ﴿٤﴾ لِيَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٥﴾ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ النَّاسُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٦﴾
كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْفُجَارِ لَفِي سَجِّينٍ ﴿٧﴾ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا سَجِّينٌ ﴿٨﴾
كِتَابٌ مَّرْقُومٌ ﴿٩﴾ وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿١٠﴾ الَّذِينَ يُكَذِّبُونَ
بِیَوْمِ الدِّينِ ﴿١١﴾ وَمَا يُكْذِّبُ بِهِ إِلَّا كُلُّ مُعْتَدٍ أَثِيمٍ ﴿١٢﴾ إِذَا تُتْلَىٰ
عَلَيْهِ آيَاتُنَا قَالِ اسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٣﴾ كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ
مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ كَلَّا إِنَّهُمْ عَنْ رَبِّهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّمْ حُجُّوْا
﴿١٥﴾ ثُمَّ إِنَّهُمْ لَصَالُوا الْجَحِيمِ ﴿١٦﴾ ثُمَّ يُقَالُ هَٰذَا الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ
تُكَذِّبُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْآبَرَارِ لَفِي عِلِّيَّينَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ
مَا عِلِّيُّونَ ﴿١٩﴾ كِتَابٌ مَّرْقُومٌ ﴿٢٠﴾ يَشْهَدُهُ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ إِنَّ
الْآبَرَارَ لَفِي نَعِيمٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ عَلَى الْأَرَآئِكِ يَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ تَعْرِفُ فِي

وَجُوهِهِمْ نَضْرَةَ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٢٤﴾ يُسْقَوْنَ مِنْ رَحِيقٍ مَخْتُومٍ ﴿٢٥﴾
 خِتْمُهُ مِسْكٌ وَفِي ذَلِكَ فَلْيَتَنَافَسِ الْمُتَنَفِسُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَمِمَّا جَاءُ مِنْ
 تَسْنِيمٍ ﴿٢٧﴾ عَيْنًا يَشْرَبُ بِهَا الْمُقَرَّبُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا
 كَانُوا مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يَضْحَكُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَإِذَا مَرُّوا بِهِمْ يَتَغَامَزُونَ
 ﴿٣٠﴾ وَإِذَا انْقَلَبُوا إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِمْ انْقَلَبُوا فَكِهِينَ ﴿٣١﴾ وَإِذَا رَأَوْهُمْ
 قَالُوا إِنَّ هَٰؤُلَاءِ لَضَالُّونَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَمَا أُرْسِلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ خَفِظِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾
 فَالْيَوْمَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ يَضْحَكُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾ عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ
 يَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ هَلْ نُوبَ الْكُفَّارُ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

Woe to the curtailers [1] who, when they measure something to receive from people, take it in full, [2] and when they measure or weigh something to give it to them, give less than due. [3] Do they not think that they have to be raised up [4] on a Great Day, [5] the Day when all the people will stand before the Lord of the worlds? [6] Never! (i.e. they should never forget that Day.) Indeed the Record of Deeds of the sinners is in *sijjīn*. [7] And what may let you know what *sijjīn* is? [8] A register, inscribed! [9] Woe that day to the deniers, [10] who deny the Day of Requital! [11] And none denies it but every sinful transgressor. [12] When Our verses are recited to him, he says, "(These are) tales of the ancients." [13] No! But that which they used to commit has covered their hearts with rust. [14] No! Indeed they will be screened off from their Lord on that Day. [15] Then they will have to enter the Hell. [16] Then it will be said, "This is what you used to deny." [17]

No! The record of deeds of the righteous is in *'illiyyūn*. [18] And what may let you know what *'illiyyūn* is? [19] A register inscribed, [20] attended by those (angels) who are blessed with nearness to Allah! [21] Indeed the righteous will be in absolute bliss. [22] While (sitting) on thrones, they will be watching (the scenes of Paradise). [23] You will recognize on their faces the glamour of bliss. [24] They will be served with a pure sealed wine to drink, [25] the seal of which will be of musk. And in aspiring for this, the competitors should

compete. [26] and it will be blended with (a drink from) Tasnīm, [27] a spring from which will drink those who are blessed with nearness. [28]

Indeed those who were guilty used to laugh at those who believed, [29] and when they passed by them, they used to wink at one another, [30] and when they went back to their family, they went enjoying their mockery, [31] and when they saw them, they said, "Surely these are the ones who have gone astray" [32] while they were not sent as watchmen over them. [33] So, today those who believed will laugh at the disbelievers. [34] While (sitting) on thrones, they will be seeing [35] whether the disbelievers have been paid back for what they used to do. [36]

Commentary

According to Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه, Sūrah Taṭfīf was revealed in Makkah. Therefore, most of the copies of the Qur’ān refer to it as the Makkī Sūrah. According to Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās, Qatādah, Muqātil and Ḍaḥḥāk رضي الله عنه, it is a Madanī Sūrah, but only about eight verses are Makkī. Imām Nasā’ī transmits a narrative from Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه that when the Holy Prophet ﷺ arrived in Madīnah, the people of Madīnah whose most transactions were based on measurements used to cheat and short measure. For this reason, Allah revealed the Sūrah. It is reported from Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه that this is the first Sūrah that was revealed as soon as the Holy Prophet ﷺ arrived at Madīnah. The reason is that it was a common practice in Madinah that the people used to be very strict in measuring when they had to receive something from others, but when they sold something, they used to cheat the buyers. After the revelation of this Sūrah, all of them abandoned this bad custom totally, and mended themselves in a way that they are now well-known in their honesty in weighing and measuring. (Reported by Ḥakīm, Nasā’ī, and Ibn Mājah, with sound chain of narrators)

وَيْلٌ لِّلْمُطَفِّفِينَ (Woe to the curtailers...83:1) The word *muṭaffifīn* 'those who give short measure or weight' is derived from *Tatfīf* 'to give short measure or short weight'. The Qur’ānic expression 'Woe to the curtailers' is indicative of the injunction that this practice is prohibited.

Tatfīf has a Wider Scope

The Qur’ān and Sunnah have prohibited *Tatfīf* which primarily

signifies 'giving short measure and weight', because generally all transactions are carried out by things that can be measured or weighed. But the basic purpose of weighing or measuring is none else but to give a person what he deserves. It, therefore, indicates that the rule is not restricted to weights and measures only, but it includes all other means through which the rights of someone are evaluated, assessed or appraised. It is obligatory that all rights are given to the deserving persons in full, whether they are assessed by weight, measure, number or any other means. In terms of this concept of *Tatfīf*, it is prohibited to give to any person less than his due.

It is recorded in Muwāṭṭā' of Imām Mālik that Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn-ul-Khaṭṭāb ؓ saw a person curtailing [cutting short] his bowing and prostration postures in prayers, he said to him:

لَقَدْ طَفَّفْتَ

'You have committed *Tatfīf* (curtailed the right) of Allah.'

Having cited this statement of Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn-ul-Khaṭṭāb ؓ, Imām Mālik formulates the following postulate:

لكل شيءٍ وفاءٌ وتطفيفٌ

'Everything has a full due and a short measure.'

This postulate can apply even to prayers, ablution, cleanliness and all the rights of Allah and the ways of worship. If someone is deficient in fulfilling these rights of Allah, he is guilty of *Tatfīf*. Similarly if one cuts short human rights [by failing to perform duties imposed upon him or keeping to the terms of agreement duly], he is covered by the rule laid down by the verse regarding *Tatfīf*. For example, if an employee has entered into a contract with the employer that he shall work for specified time, it is imperative for him to work for the stipulated hours. If he curtails the hours, he is guilty of *Tatfīf*. Generally, people - even scholars - are lax in this matter. They do not regard curtailment of their obligations relating to service or labour as sin. May Allah protect us from it!

HADĪTH: Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās ؓ has narrated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said:

خمس بـخمس

'There are five sins, for which there are five punishments.'

[1] He who breaks his covenant, Allah will cause his enemy to subdue him.

[2] The nation that abandons the sacred laws of Allah, and decides cases according to other laws, poverty will prevail commonly among them.

[3] The nation among whom promiscuity and *zinā* (fornication or adultery) becomes rampant, Allah will punish them with epidemics and endemic diseases.

[4] Those who curtail measures and weights, Allah will cause famine to break out amongst them. and

[5] Those who fail to pay their *Zakāh*, Allah will withhold rain from them.

[Cited by Qurṭubī who said that Al-Bazzār has narrated the over-all sense of this *ḥadīth*, though with different words; and Mālik Ibn Anas has also narrated it from Ibn 'Umar].

Ṭabarānī narrates from Ibn 'Abbās ؓ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "When it becomes rampant in a community to steal from the spoils of war, Allah will cast terror of enemies into their hearts; when usury becomes a common practice in a community, death becomes a frequent occurrence in that society; a community that gives short measure and weight, Allah cuts off their sustenance; those who decide against the truth, murder becomes common among them; and those who betray their agreement, Allah causes their enemies to prevail upon them." [Mālik has also transmitted it, but as a saying of Ibn 'Abbās. See Mazḥarī].

Various Forms of Poverty, Famine and Curtailment of Sustenance

The Ḥadīth (cited above) states that people's 'sustenance' may be Cut Off as a punishment to short measuring: This can take different forms. They may be completely deprived of their sustenance; or sustenance may be available, but they may not be able to eat or use it, as it commonly happens nowadays in the case of many diseases. Likewise, 'famine' might take different forms: Items of necessity might be lacking; or they might be

available abundantly, but it might be difficult to purchase them, because the prices are unbearably exorbitant, as is experienced nowadays. The Ḥadīth says that in certain situations *faqr* will prevail in the society. *Faqr* is generally translated as 'poverty', but its real meaning in Arabic is 'being in need' or 'being dependent on someone'. Keeping this meaning in view, the situation of *faqr* pointed out in the Ḥadīth is not confined to lack of money and other necessary things, but it also includes a situation where people depend on others in their business and other necessities of life. The more a person is in need of others, the greater is his degree of *faqr*. Let us consider the conditions of the present age. Man is bound by the most complicated laws that restrict his living, his movement and his intentions, so that he is unable to eat what he wants to eat, or utter what he wants to utter. He possesses money, but he is not free to buy of his choice from where he wants to. He is not free to undertake a journey [or to travel] as and when he wants to. He is bound so much by these restrictive laws that he has no choice but to follow the official procedure for which he has to flatter the officials [at every level] including the peons. Without this, life is difficult. This entire system of dependence on others is a part of *faqr*. This elaborate explanation should dispel the doubts that might apparently arise regarding the statement of the Ḥadīth.

***Sijjīn* and 'illiyīn**

كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْفُجَّارِ لَفِي سِجِّينٍ (Never! [i.e. they should never forget that Day.] Indeed the Record of Deeds of the sinners is in *sijjīn*. [83:7]) The word *sijjīn* is derived from *sajana* which means 'imprison in a narrow place'. According to Qāmūs, the word *sijjīn* means 'eternal imprisonment'. Traditions indicate that *sijjīn* is a special place where the souls of the non-believers are kept, and in the same place, the Record of the evil deeds of every wicked person is kept separately. It is also possible that in this there is a consolidated book in which the deeds of all the non-believers of the world are recorded.

Where is this place? According to a lengthy *ḥadīth* reported by Sayyidnā Bara' Ibn 'Azib رضي الله عنه, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said that *sijjīn* is beneath the seventh level of the earth, and 'illiyīn is in the seventh heaven beneath the Divine Throne. [Baghawī, and Aḥmad etc., as quoted by Maḥzarī]. According to certain Traditions, *sijjīn* is the seventh earth which

contains the souls of the disbelievers, and 'illiyyīn is the seventh heaven which contains the souls of the believers.

The Locale of Paradise and Hell

Baihaqī has recorded a narration from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Salām ؓ that Paradise is in the heaven, and Hell is in the earth. Ibn Jarīr cites in his commentary on the authority of Sayyidnā Mu'adh Ibn Jabal ؓ a narrative of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, according to which he was asked about the meaning of the following verse:

وَجَايَءُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِجَهَنَّمَ

'and Jahannam (Hell), on that day, will be brought forward,
[89:23]'

The Holy Prophet ﷺ was asked from where the Hell be brought forward? He replied: "From the seventh earth." These narratives indicate that Hell will be brought forward from the seventh earth. It will suddenly flare up there, and all the oceans will join its blazing fire, and come forward in full view of all. This interpretation is reconcilable with narratives that define *sijjīn* as the name of a place in Hell. [Maḏharī]. And Allah knows best!

كُتِبَ مَرْقُومٌ (A register inscribed!...83:9) The word *marqūm* (translated above as 'inscribed') signifies here *makhtūm* meaning 'sealed'. Imām Baghawī and Ibn Kathīr say that this statement is not the interpretation of *sijjīn*, but rather the explication of a phrase before that, namely:

كُتِبَ الْفُجَّارِ

'Indeed the record of deeds of the sinners is in *sijjīn*. [83:7]'

It is a book inscribed and sealed. No one can add anything to it, nor can anyone remove anything from it, nor is any alteration possible in it. The place where it will be kept for safe-custody is called *sijjīn*, and it is the place where the souls of the wicked unbelievers are gathered.

كَأَلَّا بَلَ سَكَ رَانَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ (No! But that which they used to commit has covered their hearts with rust...83:14). The word *rāna* is derived from *rain* and it means 'rust' or 'dust' or 'filth'. In other words, the rust of committing many sins has covered up their hearts. Just as rust consumes the iron, and turns it into dust, in the same way, the rust of

sins has destroyed their innate capacity to distinguish right from wrong. Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه narrates that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Surely, when the servant commits a sin, a black dot appears on his heart. If he repents from it, his heart is polished clean. However, if he increases in the sin, the blackness continues to increase. That is the statement of Allah: *كَأَنَّهُمْ كَلَّأَ بِلُغَتِهِمْ* 'No! But that which they used to commit has covered their hearts with rust. [83:14]'." [Baghawī, Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Ḥibbān and al-Ḥākim have recorded it, and Tirmidhī has rated it as *sahih*, asquoted by Maḥzarī]. The particle *kallā*, in Arabic grammar, is called *ḥarf-ur-rad'* 'particle of disapproval, particle of repelling or averting'. In the preceding verses, mention was made of the attitude of the unbelievers towards the Qur'ānic verses, in that when they are recited to them, they say, "(These are) tales of the ancients." [13]. The present verse uses *kallā* to repel the false idea of the ignoramus [that Qur'ān is the tale of the ancients]. In fact, [the heavy] load of their sins have eclipsed the light and innate capacity to separate the right and the wrong. This capacity is innate and inborn in man. The verse purports to say that their rejection is not based on any logical or intellectual evidence, but their hearts have become blind, as a result they are unable to see the good and the bad.

إِنَّهُمْ عَنْ رَبِّهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَمَّحْجُوبُونَ (No! Indeed they will be screened off from their Lord on that Day...83:15). This will be their punishment for their failure to recognise Allah in the world. The unbelievers will remain deprived of seeing their Lord on the Day of Judgement, and a screen will fall between them and their Lord. Imāms Shāfi'ī and Mālik said that in this verse is a proof that the believers and friends of Allah will be able to see Him. Otherwise, the wording that the unbelievers will be screened off from their Lord on that Day will have no real sense.

Special Note

According to some of the learned predecessors, this verse is a proof that man, by virtue of his innate nature, is forced to love Allah. Therefore, all unbelievers in the world, no matter how deeply they are steeped in their form of disbelief or hold false beliefs regarding the [Supreme] Being and attributes of Allah, there is a common denominator in their hearts. They love, respect and honour Allah. They worship Him according to their belief system in quest of Him and His pleasure. Because they have taken the wrong road, they are unable to reach their

destination, but they are, nonetheless, in search of the same destination of truth. If they did not have the desire to see their Lord, it would not have been said, in their punishment, that they will remain deprived of seeing Allah, because if a person is not desirous [rather he is hateful] of seeing Him, it would be no punishment for him.

كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْأَبْرَارِ لَفِي عِلِّيَّيْنَ (No! The record of deeds of the righteous is in 'illiyyūn....83:18). According to some authorities, 'illiyyūn is the plural of 'uluww and it signifies the 'highest point'. According to Farrā', this is the name of a place. It is not a plural, but on the measure of plural. When analysing the word *sijjīn* in the foregoing paragraphs, the traceable Tradition of Sayyidnā Barā' Ibn 'Āzib ؓ was cited to prove that 'illiyyīn is a place on the seventh heaven beneath the Divine Throne where the souls of the believers and their registers of deeds are kept. The phrase: كِتَابٌ مَّرْقُومٌ (A register inscribed...83:20) is not the interpretation of 'illiyyīn, but rather an explication their records of deeds, as in the verse that precedes it:

يُسْهَدُهُ الْمُرَقَّبُونَ (...attended by those [angels] who are blessed with nearness to Allah!...83:21) The verb *yash-hadu* is derived from *shuhūd* which means 'to attend, to witness, to be present, to observe'. The verse purports to say that the record of deeds of the righteous will be in the custody of angels who are blessed with nearness to Allah. [Qurtubī]. If *shuhūd* is taken in the sense of 'being present', then the attached pronoun will refer to 'illiyyīn instead of *kitāb* or 'register' (and 'those who are blessed with nearness to Allah' will refer to the righteous people, and not to the angels), and the verse in that case will mean: 'The souls of those blessed with nearness to Allah will be in the place called 'illiyyīn' because that is the abode of their souls, as *sijjīn* is the abode of the unbelievers. The proof of this is the narrative of 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ recorded in Muslim in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that the souls of the martyrs are in the crops of green birds, enjoying the rivers and gardens of Paradise, and their abode will be the lamps suspended from [the Divine] Throne. This indicates that the souls of the martyrs will be under the Divine Throne, and will be able to stroll in Paradise. In Sūrah Yāsīn, we came across the incident of Ḥabīb Najjār, where it is stated that:

قِيلَ ادْخُلِ الْجَنَّةَ قَالَ يَا لَيْتَ قَوْمِي يَعْلَمُونَ بِمَا غَفَرَ لِي رَبِّي

'He was told, "Enter the Garden!" He said, "If my people only knew how my Lord has forgiven me [36:26]"

This indicates that no sooner he passed away than he entered Paradise. Similarly, some Prophetic narratives also show that the souls of the believers are in Paradise. The sum total of these verses and narratives is that the abode of all the souls is in the seventh heaven beneath the Divine Throne. This is the locale of Paradise, and the souls have been given freedom of movement within the Paradise. Here reference has been made particularly to 'those souls who are blessed with nearness to Allah' because of the most exalted ranks they will enjoy. [This does not, however, mean that souls at the lower ranks will not be in this abode.] In fact, this will be the abode of the souls of all the believers as is narrated by Sayyidnā Ka'b Ibn Mālīk رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

انما نسمة المؤمن طائر يعلق في شجر الجنة حتى ترجع الى جسده يوم القيامة.
(رواه مالك والنسائي بسند صحيح)

'The soul of a believer is a bird that will be hanging in the tree of Paradise, until it returns to its body on the Day of Judgement.' [Mālīk and Nasā'ī through an authentic chain of narrators. A Tradition of Umm Hānī' to the same effect is recorded in Musnad of Aḥmad and in Ṭabarānī. See Maẓharī].

The Abode of Human Souls After Death

What is the abode of human souls after death? In answer to this question, reports seem apparently different. Narratives were cited in explanation of *sijjīn* and *'illiyyūn* above which showed that the souls of the unbelievers are in *sijjīn* which is beneath the seventh earth, and the souls of the believers are in *'illiyyūn* which is in the seventh heaven beneath the Divine Throne. Some traditions indicate that the souls of the unbelievers will be in Hell, and the souls of the believers will be in Paradise. Some narratives, like the lengthy narrative of Barā' Ibn 'Āzib, suggest that the souls of all the deceased, believers and non-believers, will be in the graves. When the angels carry the soul of a believer to the sky, Allah says: 'Keep the record of deeds of this servant of mine in *'illiyyūn* and return him to the earth, because I have created him from earth, and to it I shall return him, and from it I shall resurrect him.' Complying with this command, the angels return his soul to the grave. Likewise, the soul

of the non-believer is carried to the sky, but the doors are not opened for him. The angels will be commanded to return the soul to its grave. Imām ‘Abdul Barr prefers this narrative and believes that the souls of all [believers and non-believers] remain in their graves. As for the first two sets of traditions, there is no contradiction because, carefully considered, ‘*illiyyūn* is in the seventh heaven beneath the Divine Throne, and this is exactly the locale of Paradise, as is clear from the Qur’ānic text:

عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنتَهَى عِنْدَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَأْوَى

'by sidrat-ul-muntaha (the lot-tree in the upper realm), near which there is Jannat-ul-ma'wa (the Paradise of Abode), [53:14-15]

This clearly states that Paradise is near the lot-tree in the upper realm, and *aḥādīth* confirm that the lot-tree is in the seventh heaven. Thus it may be argued that since the abode of the souls is ‘*illiyyūn*, Paradise must be near it. These souls will stroll in and along the Gardens of Paradise. Therefore, their abode may be said to be Paradise.

Similarly, the souls of the unbelievers remain in *sijjīn* which is situated beneath the seventh earth. It is also proved by *ahādīth* that Hell is beneath the seventh earth, and the dwellers of *sijjīn* will receive the heat and torture of the Hell. Therefore, it would be correct to say that their abode is in Hell.

However, the *hadith* that informs us that the souls of the unbelievers will remain in the graves, is apparently contradictory to the preceding two narratives. The Baihaqī of his time, Qāḍī Thanā’ullah Pānī Patī, in his *Tafsīr Maḥzarī*, has reconciled them thus: It is not far-fetched to assume that ‘*illiyyūn* and *sijjīn* are the real abodes of the souls, but they have a special connection with their graves. None, besides Allah, knows the actual nature of the connection. However, there is the sun and the moon in the sky, but their rays fall on the earth and provide to it light and heat. Similarly, the souls of ‘*illiyyūn* and *sijjīn* may have some spiritual connection with the graves. The scholarly view of Qāḍī Thanā’ullah Pānī Patī has just been discussed in Sūrah Nāzi‘āt, the sum total of which is as follows: There are two types of soul: The one is a subtle substance that permeates the human body. Despite being a material substance, it is too subtle to be visible, and its other name is *nafs*. The other soul is abstract and non-material, pure essence. The pure, abstract and non-material soul

is the life of the first soul, and therefore it is called the 'soul of soul'. Both the categories of souls are connected to human body, but the first type of soul resides in the human body. When the soul leaves the body, death occurs. The second type of soul is connected with the body more closely than the first type, but Allah alone knows the nature of the connection. The first soul, after death, is taken to the heaven, and then returned to the grave. Grave is its abode where it is rewarded and punished. The abstract soul remains in *'illiyyūn* or *sijjīn* [as the case might be]. Thus we have several views on the issue. The final destination of souls is Paradise or *'illiyyūn*, or its opposite Hell or *sijjīn*. The abode of the abstract souls is *'illiyyūn* or *sijjīn*. The souls of the first type, the *nafs*, or the body, remains in the grave after death. And Allah knows best!

وَفِي ذَلِكَ فَلْيَتَنَافَسِ الْمُتَنَافِسُونَ (and in aspiring for this, the competitors should compete....83:26) The word *tanāfus* means for a few people 'to try or strive to gain some desirable things before others can get them.' Having mentioned the bounties of Paradise, the attention of heedless people are drawn to the fact that they are thinking that certain material things are desirable, and therefore they are competing one another to obtain them before others. They are told that the material blessings [after which they are running] are perishable. They should not be made the ultimate goal of life, nor the object of racing. Man should be content with what he has for the comfort of the fleeting period of this life. If he loses the means, it should not hurt him much, because it is not a loss that cannot be recovered. However, people with aspiration should aspire, race and compete for the blessings of Paradise that are perfect and eternal in every possible dimension. How aptly the late poet Akbar has put it:

یہ کہاں کا فسانہ ہے سود و زیاں، جو گیا سو گیا جو ملا سو ملا
کہو دل سے فرصت عمر ہے کم، جو دلا تو خدا ہی کی یاد دلا

'Gain and loss - what fiction is this?

What is lost is lost, what is gained is gained

Say to the mind, the life is little.

If you wish to remind me, remind me of God.'

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا كَانُوا مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يَضْحَكُونَ (Indeed those who were guilty used to laugh at those who believed, 83:29). In these verses, Allah depicts fully the attitudes of the followers of falsehood [non-believers] towards the

upholders of truth [the believers]. The non-believers used to laugh at the believers in the worldly life. In other words, they would mock at them and despise them. Whenever they would pass by the believers, they would wink at each other in contempt of them. When the non-believers returned home, they would take great pleasure in describing the mocking manner in which they treated the poor believers, saying that Muḥammad has misled the simpletons.

If we review the situation today, [it is no better.] People whose minds are contaminated with contemporary secular education, are careless about the religion and the Hereafter. Belief in Allah and the Holy Prophet ﷺ is nominal. They treat the [religious] scholars and righteous people exactly in the same manner as the non-believers used to treat the Companions in the days of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. May Allah salvage the Muslims from this painful scourge. There is much solace in this verse for the righteous believers. Never bother about their laughter and mockery. How well a poet puts it:

ہم نے جانے سے جب تک ہم ڈریں گے
زمانہ ہم پہ ہنستا ہی رہے گا

'So long as we fear people's laughter [at us],
the people will continue laughing at us'

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah At-Taṭfīf
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Inshiqāq (The Splitting)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 25 verses and 1 section.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 25

إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انْشَقَّتْ ﴿١﴾ وَأَذْنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ ﴿٢﴾ وَإِذَا الْأَرْضُ
 مُدَّتْ ﴿٣﴾ وَأَلْقَتْ مَا فِيهَا وَتَخَلَّتْ ﴿٤﴾ وَأَذْنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ
 ﴿٥﴾ يَأْتِيهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَى رَبِّكَ كَدْحًا فَمُلْقِيهِ ﴿٦﴾ فَمَّا
 مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ ﴿٧﴾ فَسَوْفَ يُحَاسَبُ حِسَابًا يَسِيرًا ﴿٨﴾
 وَيَنْقَلِبُ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ مَسْرُورًا ﴿٩﴾ وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ وَرَاءَ ظَهْرِهِ
 ﴿١٠﴾ فَسَوْفَ يَدْعُوا ثُبُورًا ﴿١١﴾ وَيَصْلَى سَعِيرًا ﴿١٢﴾ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فِي
 أَهْلِهِ مَسْرُورًا ﴿١٣﴾ إِنَّهُ ظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ يَحُورَ ﴿١٤﴾ بَلَى إِنَّ رَبَّهُ كَانَ بِهِ
 بَصِيرًا ﴿١٥﴾ فَلَا أَقْسِمُ بِالشَّفَقِ ﴿١٦﴾ وَاللَّيْلِ وَمَا وَسَقَ ﴿١٧﴾
 وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا اتَّسَقَ ﴿١٨﴾ لَتَرْكَبُنَّ طَبَقًا عَنْ طَبَقٍ ﴿١٩﴾ فَمَا لَهُمْ لَا
 يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَإِذَا قُرِئَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقُرْآنُ لَا يَسْجُدُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ بَلِ الَّذِينَ
 كَفَرُوا يَكْذِبُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يُوعُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ
 بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٢٤﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ
 مَمْنُونٍ ﴿٢٥﴾

When the sky will split apart, [1] and will listen to (the command of) its Lord, and it ought to, [2] and when the earth will be stretched (to give room to more people), [3] and it will throw up whatever it contains, and will become empty, [4] and will listen to (the command of) its Lord, and it ought to, (then man will see the consequences of his deeds.) [5] O man, you have to work hard constantly to reach your Lord, then you have to meet Him. [6] So, as for him whose book (of deeds) will be given to him in his right hand, [7] he will be called to account in an easy manner, [8] and he will go back to his people joyfully. [9] As for the one whose book (of deeds) will be given to him from his back side, [10] he will pray for death, [11] and will enter the blazing fire. [12] He had been joyful among his people. [13] He thought he would never revert (to Allah). [14] Why not? Indeed his Lord was watchful over him. [15] So, I swear by the twilight (after sunset), [16] and by the night and what it envelops, [17] and by the moon when it develops at the full, [18] you shall certainly ascend from stage to stage. [19] So, what has happened to them that they do not believe, [20] and when the Qur'ān is recited to them, they do not offer *sajdah* (prostration)? [21] Rather, those who disbelieve deny (the truth). [22] And Allah is most aware of what they store. [23] So give him the 'good news' of a painful punishment, [24] but those who believed and did righteous deeds, for them there is a reward that will never be interrupted. [25]

Commentary

The present Sūrah depicts the conditions that will prevail on the Day of Judgement, such as reckoning and accountability, reward of good and torment of evil. The heedless man is asked to look into himself and his environs, which will lead him to believe in Allah and the Qur'ān. [The powerful opening of the Sūrah sketches some of the scenes of universal upheaval]. First, it speaks about the sky that will split apart. Then it goes on to speak about the earth that will be stretched and will throw up whatever it contains - whether natural treasures, or buried treasures, or dead human bodies, and then it will become empty. A new earth will be prepared for *Ḥashr* (Gathering of the Day of Requit). It will have neither caves nor mountains, neither buildings nor trees. It will be flat and smooth. It will be stretched so that there is ample room for the former as well as the latter generations to gather on the plain. This description

has been given in other Sūrahs with different styles, but in the present verses, there is an addition. About what Allah will demonstrate about the heaven and earth on the Day of Judgement, the following comment is made:

وَأَذْنُ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ (and will listen to (the command of) its Lord, and it ought to,...84:5) The verb *adhinat* means 'it will listen'. Here listening includes obedience. The verb *huqqat* may be interpreted as 'It had an obligation to listen and obey Allah's command'.

Two Categories of Divine Commands

The obedience of the heaven and the earth, referred to here, may have two meanings, because the Divine commands are of two kinds: [1] the Divinely legislated [*tashrī'ī*] injunctions; and [2] the cosmic and destined [*takwīnī* and *taqdīrī*] commands. In the former case, the command appears as a law the violation of which is punishable. However, men are not practically coerced in the sense that they become practically unable to violate it. Instead, they have their free will to choose whether to abide by the law or to violate it. Such laws are imposed upon those who are endowed with intellect like humans and Jinn. This divides them into believers and non-believers, obedient and disobedient. In the former case, the commands are implemented by force. No one can deviate from them in the least. The entire universe, including humans and Jinn, follow them by force. The cosmic commands [which Allah has decreed] are applied forcefully and all the creatures, whether believers or unbelievers, pious or impious, have no choice or will but to do according to that command.

ذَرَّه ذَرَّه دَہر کا پابستہ تقدیر ہے
زندگی کے خواب کی جانی یہی تعبیر ہے

'Every particle in this world is bound by the Divine Decree.
Jāmī, this is the interpretation of the dream of life.'

It is possible that Allah will, on that day, endow the sky and the earth with special sense and perception like humans and Jinn. When they receive a command from Allah, they, of their own volition choose to act upon it. Alternatively, the command may refer to the second kind, that is, the cosmic command that no one can violate. But the words, وَأَذْنُ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ, "and will listen to [the command of] its Lord, and it ought to," are closer to the first meaning of command, while the second one is possible, if these

words are taken in their figurative sense.

وَإِذَا الْأَرْضُ مُدَّتْ (and when the earth will be stretched [to give room to more people]...84:3) The word *madda* means 'to stretch, spread, expand out'. Sayyidnā Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh ؓ narrates that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that on the Day of Judgement the earth will be stretched out like leather (or rubber) and expanded into a smooth plain, and there will be just enough space on it for all individuals of human race to keep their feet. To understand this tradition, it is necessary to keep in mind that on the Day of Resurrection all individuals who will have been born from the inception of creation till resurrection will be brought back to life simultaneously. Thus each individual will have just enough space on the earth where he could place his feet. [Transmitted by Hākim with a good chain of authorities - Maḏharī].

وَأَلْقَتْ مَا فِيهَا وَتَخَلَّتْ (and it will throw up whatever it contains, and will become empty...84:4) The earth will, with one convulsion, throw up whatever it contains in its belly, whether natural treasures or buried treasures, or mines, or dead human bodies and their remains and particles.

يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَدْحًا فَمُلَاقِيهِ (O man, you have to work hard constantly to reach your Lord, then you have to meet Him...84:6) The word *kadh* means to 'exert one's efforts fully', and 'to your Lord' means 'to meet your Lord'. In other words, every effort of man would end at his Lord.

Return to Allah

Mankind is addressed in this verse and shown a road that if he were to think about it carefully, and use his sense and intelligence, he could exert his efforts in the right direction that will ensure for him welfare, well-being and safety in this world, as well as in the Hereafter. First, it has been pointed out that man, whether he is good or bad, believer or non-believer, has the natural tendency to exert himself in order to achieve his goal. A good-natured person will work hard and adopt lawful means to acquire his livelihood and necessities of life. A bad person cannot obtain his needs and objective without working hard. Thieves, robbers, rouses, cheats and looters apply their minds and exert their physical strength in order to achieve their objective. Secondly, it has been pointed

out that if the intelligent man were to think carefully, all his movements and pauses are stations of a long journey he is going through, though unconsciously. This journey will end at his presence before Allah, that is, at death. This is stated in the phrase *ilā rabbika* 'to your Lord'. This is a statement of reality which none can deny. All efforts, [good or bad], must end with death. The third point is that after death, in the presence of his Lord, he will have to give an account of his movements and deeds, and of his efforts. This is rationally necessary and justified, so that the consequences of good and bad may be separately known, because such distinction is not known in this life. A good person may work hard for a month or so in order to obtain his livelihood and necessities of life, but thieves and looters may obtain them overnight. If there is no time of reckoning or punishment, both of them [the good and the bad] will be equal, which is contrary to reason and justice. At the end, the verse says: *فَمُتِّبِهِ* (then you have to meet Him.) The translation given above is based on the assumption that the attached pronoun (*hī*) refers to Allah. The sense is that every person has to meet his Lord and to present himself before him to give the account of his deeds. Another possible interpretation is that the attached pronoun (*hī*) refers to '*kadḥ*' (working hard). Given this interpretation, the translation of the verse would be: "O man, you have to work hard constantly to reach your Lord, then you have to meet it." And the sense would be: 'you have to meet the good or bad consequences of your working hard.'

The verses that follow depict separately the consequences of the good and the bad people, of the believers and the non-believers. First, the ledger of deeds must be received in the right or the left hand. Those who receive the ledgers in their right hands will be the inmates of Paradise with its eternal blessings. Those who receive the ledgers in their left hands will be the inmates of Hell. The point for careful consideration is that necessities of life, as well as unnecessary desires are fulfilled by both righteous and wicked people in this world, and thus both spend their lives in some way or the other, but the consequences of the two [for the Hereafter] are diametrically opposite to each other. One results in eternal and unending comfort, and the other results in eternal perdition, torture and torment. Man still has the chance [while he is living] to redirect his attention to working hard towards switching the situation in a direction

that not only fulfils his legitimate needs and desires in this world, but also attains the eternal pleasures of the Hereafter.

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ ﴿٧﴾ فَسَوْفَ يُحَاسَبُ حِسَابًا يَسِيرًا ﴿٨﴾ وَتَنْقَلِبُ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ مُسْرُورًا ﴿٩﴾

(So, as for him whose book [of deeds] will be given to him in his right hand, he will be called to account in an easy manner, and he will go back to his people joyfully....7-9)

This verse describes the condition of the believers. Their books of deeds will be given to them in their right hands. An easy reckoning will be taken from them and the welcome news of Paradise will be given to them. They will return to their families joyfully.

It is reported in the Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī from Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رضى الله عنها that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said:

من حوسب يوم القيامة عذب

"He who is required to account for [or questioned about] his deeds will have to be punished."

At this Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رضى الله عنها asked, "What is the meaning of the [following] verse ?" يُحَاسَبُ حِسَابًا يَسِيرًا (he will be called to account in an easy manner,...84:8). The Holy Prophet ﷺ explained that the verse signifies 'the deeds will merely be presented before Allah without being questioned. As for the person whose deeds are scrutinised, he will never be able to escape torment'.

This explanation of the Holy Prophet ﷺ clarifies that the deeds of the believers will also be presented before Allah, but by virtue of their faith, not all of their actions will be scrutinised. This is referred to as 'account in an easy manner'. The words 'he will go back to his people joyfully' may be interpreted in one of two ways. This may refer to the Houris who will be his family members in Paradise, or it may refer to his family members in the world who will be present in the Plain of Gathering, and he, after knowing about his success, will impart to them, according to the custom of this life, the welcome news of his achievement. The commentators have mentioned both possibilities in interpreting this sentence. [Qurṭubī].

كَانَ فِي أَهْلِهِ مُسْرُورًا (He had been joyful among his people...84:13). This verse tells us that those who will be given their Record in their left hands

from behind their backs, they will desire death and destruction under the impression that this might end their misery. But it will not be possible for them to die. One of the reasons given here for his misery is that he used to live joyfully among his people in the world, and he was completely oblivious of the Hereafter. The believers, on the other hand, never for a moment were oblivious of the Hereafter in the life of this world. At every moment of pleasure and comfort, they were anxious and worried about the Hereafter. The Qur'ān quotes the believers on another occasion as saying:

إِنَّا كُنَّا قَبْلُ فِي أَهْلِنَا مُشْفِقِينَ

'Indeed we were afraid (of Allah's punishment) when we were amidst of our family, [At-Ṭūr 26]

In other words, they lived among their families and yet were fearful and conscious of the Hereafter. The consequences of the two groups will be appropriate to their respective positions. Those who led a life of luxury and pleasure in this world with their families oblivious of the Hereafter, their portion will be punishment of Hell in the next world. Those who were aware of reckoning and feared punishment in the next world will live with their families in eternal luxury, pleasure and happiness. This indicates that a believer should not be immersed in the comforts of this life. At no time and in no circumstance should he be oblivious to the reckoning of the Hereafter.

فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالشَّفَقِ وَالَّيْلِ وَمَا وَسَقَ. وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا اتَّسَقَ (So, I swear by the twilight [after sunset], and by the night and what it envelops, and by the moon when it develops at the full...84:16-18) In these verses Allah takes oath by four phenomena and reinforces what was asserted in :

إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ

'you have to work hard constantly to reach your Lord'

If we consider the four phenomena by which oath is taken, it bears evidence to the subject which is forthcoming in the complement of the oath, that is, the condition of man never remains the same at all times. He undergoes changes and unexpected phases all the time. The first phenomenon that brings about a change in his life is the twilight after the sunset, or the red glow that remains on the west side of the sky after

the sunset in the evening. This is the beginning of the night. This is the harbinger of a massive change in human conditions, that is, the light is disappearing and a flood of darkness is setting in. The second phenomenon by which oath is taken is night itself which completes the change in his life. The third phenomenon by which oath is taken includes all things that night envelops or shrouds. The primitive sense of the word *wasāqa* means to 'pile, gather, heap up the thing'. If it is taken in general sense, it embraces every member of the entire universe which the darkness of night covers, such as animals, vegetation, minerals and inorganic matter, mountains and oceans. By extension, the word would comprehend all things that normally disperse in the light of day and retreat to their own places at night. Human beings return to their homes, animals to their habitats and birds to their nests. Business goods and merchandise are or piled up in one place. This massive change is related to man himself. The fourth phenomenon by which oath is taken is in the following verse: وَالْقَمَرَ إِذَا اتَّسَقَ (and by the moon when it develops at the full...84:18). The word *ittisāq* is also derived from *wasāqa* and it means 'to gather'. The 'gathering of moon' signifies that it gathered its light, and it became complete and full [*badr*] the moon of the 14th night. The phrase إِذَا اتَّسَقَ *idhat-tasāqa* in relation to moon points to the phenomenon that it goes through various phases. First, it appears as a very fine semicircle. Then its light grows progressively night after night, until it becomes *badr kāmīl* [full moon of the 14th night]. Having taken oath by the vicissitudes of the four phenomena, the Sūrah asserts the subject: لَتَرْكَبُنَّ طَبَقًا عَنْ طَبَقٍ (you shall certainly ascend from stage to stage....84:19) The word *ṭabaq* or *ṭabqah* refers to a 'stage'. Its plural is *ṭabaqāt*. The verb لَتَرْكَبُنَّ *latarkabunna* is derived from *rukūb* which means 'to mount or mount up'. The verse purports to say that mankind from the inception to the end of his life will continue to mount up stage by stage, or will pass through all the conditions, gradually and in stages referred to in the preceding verses, that is, periods of light and darkness and other phenomena. He never remains in one condition all the time. He gradually goes through the vicissitudes of life.

Vicissitudes of Human Life, His Eternal Journey and His Final Destination

In the first instance the male sperm is united with the female egg to

form a new human organism. This is turned into a blood-clot which transforms into a lump of flesh, and the lump is formed into bones, and the bones are clothed in flesh. The limbs of the human body thus were completed. Then the soul was breathed into him, and he became a living human being. His first food in the womb of his mother was the unclean blood of the mother's womb. Nine months later, Allah made his way easy to come into the world. Now instead of the unclean blood, he got the [pure] milk of his mother's [breast]. When he saw the wide atmosphere and air of the world, he began to grow and develop. Within the first two years of his life, he started moving and walking about, and was able to talk. He weaned and began to eat more delicious and different types of food. As he grew a little older, he made play and amusement his daily preoccupation. When his intelligence developed [sufficiently], he was tied up in educational and training activities. When he grew into a youth, he abandoned all previous activities and replaced them with youth activities and ushered himself in a new era where marriage, children and house-keeping became his day-to-day preoccupation. Eventually, this era too neared its end. His physical and other prowess began to give up, and every day he fell prey to new ailments. Old age set in. The final stage of this life, that is, death, began to mount. All this happens in full view of everyone. No one dare deny this. But the ignoramus assumes that death or grave is his final stage, and there is nothing beyond. Allah, the Creator of the universe, the Omniscient, made it known, through the various Prophets [through the ages], to the heedless man that grave is not the final stage of his life, but it is merely a waiting-room to enter an enormously large and gigantic world that is yet to come, where the final examination will be conducted and the final stage of his life will be determined. In this world, he will celebrate the Divine remembrance and enjoy eternal comfort and pleasure or he will suffer eternal perdition and damnation [depending on the final assessment]. This is where the vicissitudes of his life will end. Thus the Qur'an says:

إِنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الرُّجْعَىٰ

'Surely, to your Lord is the return [96:8]'

إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ

'and that to your Lord is the end (of every one), [42]'

إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَدْحًا

'you have to work hard constantly to reach your Lord [84:6]'

The ignoramus and unmindful man is made aware of the fact that the vicissitudes of life are stages in the journey to his final destination. Man ought to realise that walking, moving about, sleeping, waking, and standing and sitting are conditions, in the process of which he is covering the stages of his journey. Eventually, he will reach his Lord and, accounting for his life-long deeds, he will find his final abode that will be a place of never-ending comfort, luxury and pleasure, or [God forbid!] a place of never-ending retribution, torture and torment. A wise person should treat himself in this world as a traveller and prepare himself for the next world. His main goal in this life should be to cultivate for the next life as the Prophet ﷺ said:

كُنْ فِي الدُّنْيَا كَأَنَّكَ غَرِيبٌ أَوْ عَابِرُ سَبِيلٍ

"Be in this world as though you are a stranger or a wayfarer."

Under the phrase above *tabaqan* 'an *ṭabaq* 'from stage to stage', a similar narration is cited by Abū Nu'aim from Sayyidnā Jābir Ibn 'Abdullāh رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ stated that these verses remind the unmindful of his creation, the vicissitudes of his life and instructs him to reconsider his position and the consequences [of his attitude in this life as there is still time] and to prepare for next life. However, despite these clear guidelines, there are people who never desist from their heedlessness. Therefore, the verse concludes:

فَمَا لَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ، وَإِذَا قُرِئَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقُرْآنُ لَا يَسْجُدُونَ

So, what has happened to them that they do not believe, and when the Qur'an is recited to them, they do not offer *sajdah* [prostration]? (84:20-21)

It means that when the Qur'an, replete with clear guidelines, is recited to them, they do not bow in submission.

The word *sajdah* / *sujūd* literally denotes 'to bow' and it connotes 'obedience'. Obviously, the word here is not used in its technical sense. It is used in the sense of bowing in submission with respect, humbleness and humility. The reason [for this interpretation] is quite clear. This verse does not command to prostrate at the time of recitation of a particular

verse. It is related to the entire Qur'ān. If the word *sajdah* had referred to the technical prostration, it would necessarily entail that prostration be offered at every verse of the entire Qur'ān, which by unanimous agreement of the Ummah is not the case. Neither *salaf* nor *khalaf* subscribe to this view. Now remains the question whether or not a *sajdah* is obligatory when this verse is recited. (There is a disagreement among the jurists on this point) By a long stretch of imagination, it is possible to use this verse in evidence or support of arguing in favour of prostration being obligatory on recitation of this verse, as some of the Ḥanafī jurists have done. According to them, the definite article al- 'the' in the word al-Qur'ān stands for the article that is used to indicate previous knowledge, and thus the word al-Qur'ān here refers to this particular verse under comment, not to the entire al-Qur'ān or the Holy Book. However, this interpretation is after all merely a possibility, but the clear context of the verse indicates that it seems to be far-fetched to take the verse in this sense. And Allah knows best! The true interpretation can be determined by prophetic narratives, the practice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and that of the noble Companions. The narratives pertaining to *sajdah* of *tilāwah* differ. Some indicate that it is an obligatory duty to make *sajdah* on this verse, and others indicate that it is not. As a result, there is a difference of opinion among jurists. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah holds the view that prostration at this verse is an obligatory duty as is obligatory at other verses of *mufaṣṣal*. Imām A'ẓam adduces the following Aḥādīth in favour of his opinion:

Bukhārī recorded from Abū Rāfi' ؓ that he prayed the 'Ishā' [Night] prayer behind Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ, and the latter recited: إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انْشَقَّتْ (When the sky will split apart) and at the relevant verse, he prostrated. So, Sayyidnā Abū Rāfi' ؓ asked him what type of prostration it was. Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ replied: "I prostrated at this verse behind Abul Qāsim in a *ṣalāh*, and I will never cease prostrating during its recitation until I meet him on the Plain of Gathering." Muslim transmitted a narrative from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ that they prostrated with the Holy Prophet ﷺ at relevant verses of this Sūrah, and of اِقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ

Qurṭubī reports from Ibn-ul-'Arabī that the veritable view is that this verse is one of the verses at which it is an obligatory duty to prostrate

when read or recited or heard being recited. However, the people among whom Ibn-ul-‘Arabī lived' it was not customary among them to prostrate at this verse. They probably followed an Imam, according to whom the prostration was not obligatory. As a result, Ibn-ul-‘Arabī says that whenever he led the congregational prayer, he would avoid reciting Sūrah Al-Inshiqāq, because in his view prostration at the relevant verse is obligatory. If he does not perform the prostration, he would be sinning. If he does perform the prostration, the entire congregation would regard it an unnecessary act. Therefore, he felt he should not unnecessarily split the community. And Allah knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Inshiqāq
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Burūj (Stellar Formations)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 22 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 22

وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الْبُرُوجِ ﴿١﴾ وَالْيَوْمِ الْمَوْعُودِ ﴿٢﴾ وَشَاهِدٍ
وَمَشْهُودٍ ﴿٣﴾ قَتَلَ أَصْحَابُ الْأُخْدُودِ ﴿٤﴾ النَّارِ ذَاتِ الْوَقُودِ ﴿٥﴾
إِذْهُمْ عَلَيْهَا قُوعُودٌ ﴿٦﴾ وَهُمْ عَلَى مَا يَفْعَلُونَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ شُهُودٌ ﴿٧﴾
وَمَا نَقَمُوا مِنْهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ ﴿٨﴾ الَّذِي لَهُ
مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۖ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ﴿٩﴾ إِنَّ
الَّذِينَ فَتَنُوا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَتُوبُوا فَلَهُمْ عَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ
وَلَهُمْ عَذَابُ الْحَرِيقِ ﴿١٠﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ
جَنَّاتُ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ۚ ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْكَبِيرُ ﴿١١﴾ إِنَّ بَطْشَ
رَبِّكَ لَشَدِيدٌ ﴿١٢﴾ إِنَّهُ هُوَ يُبْدِئُ وَيُعِيدُ ﴿١٣﴾ وَهُوَ الْغَفُورُ الْودُودُ
﴿١٤﴾ ذُو الْعَرْشِ الْمَجِيدُ ﴿١٥﴾ فَعَالٌ لِمَا يُرِيدُ ﴿١٦﴾ هَلْ أُنَبِّئُكَ
بِحَدِيثِ الْجُنُودِ ﴿١٧﴾ فِرْعَوْنٌ وَثَمُودَ ﴿١٨﴾ بَلِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي
تَكْذِيبٍ ﴿١٩﴾ وَاللَّهُ مِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ مُحِيطٌ ﴿٢٠﴾ بَلْ هُوَ قُرْآنٌ مَجِيدٌ
﴿٢١﴾ فِي لَوْحٍ مَحْفُوظٍ ﴿٢٢﴾

I swear by the sky, the one having stellar formations, [1] and by the Promised Day, [2] and by that which attends, and that which is attended, [3] cursed were the People of the Trench, [4] the (people of the) fire that was rich with fuel, [5] when they were sitting by it, [6] and were watching what they were doing with the believers. [7] And they had blamed them for nothing but that they believed in Allah, the All-Mighty, the Worthy of All Praise, [8] the One to whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. And Allah is witness over every thing. [9] Surely, those who persecuted the believing men and the believing women, then did not repent, for them there is the torment of Jahannam (Hell), and for them there is the torment of burning. [10] As for those who believed and did righteous deeds, for them there are gardens beneath which rivers flow. That is the big achievement. [11]

The seizure of your Lord is severe indeed! [12] Surely He originates (creation) and repeats (it after death). [13] And He is the Most-Forgiving, the Most-Loving, [14] the Master of the Throne, the Glorious. [15] He is ever doer of what He intends. [16]

Has the come to you the story of the forces, [17] of Fir'aun (the Pharaoh) and Thamud? [18] But those who disbelieve are (engaged) in denying (the truth). [19] And Allah has encircled them from all sides. [20] The reality is that it is the glorious Qur'an, [21] (recorded) in the Preserved Tablet (Lauh Mahfuz). [22]

Commentary

وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الْبُرُوجِ (I swear by the sky, the one having stellar formations....85:1) The word *burūj* is the plural of *burj* which means 'a large mansion or fortress'. The Qur'an says:

وَلَوْ كُنْتُمْ فِي بُرُوجٍ مُّشِيدَةٍ

'...even though you are in fortified castles [4:78]'

Here the word *burūj* means 'castles'. The primitive sense of the word *barj* is to become manifest'. The word *tabarruj* means 'to display one's beauty' as in the verse:

وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَى

'...and do not display your beauty as it was previously displayed

in the Time of Ignorance [33:33]'

According to the majority of commentators like Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās, Mujāhid, Dahḥāk, Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī, Qatādah, Suddī ﷺ and others, the word *burūj*, in this verse, refers to 'giant stars'. Other commentators take the word *burūj*, in this place, to refer to mansions and castles that are reserved in the sky for the guardian angels. Some of the later commentators chose the astronomical view in which the sky is divided into twelve parts, each one called a *burj*. The primitive philosophers believed that the *thawabit* (stationary) stars are fixed in these *burūj*. The planets move with the movement of their particular sky and the planets descend in these *burūj*. But this is absolutely incorrect. According to the Qur’ān, Allah has not fixed the stars and planets in the skies. In fact, every star and planet has its own orbit and revolves by itself as in Sūrah Yā Sīn:

وَكُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ

'...And each one is floating in an orbit. [36:40]'

The word *falak* in this verse does not refer to the sky, but rather to the orbits of the stars and planets in which they move. [Mazharī]

وَالْيَوْمِ الْمَوْعُودِ. وَشَاهِدٍ وَمَشْهُودٍ (and by the Promised Day, and by that which attends, and that which is attended...85:2,3) With reference to a prophetic *Ḥadīth* reported by Tirmidhī, the phrase 'the Promised Day' refers to the Day of Judgement; the phrase 'that which attends' refers to 'Friday'; and the phrase 'that which is attended' refers to the day of ‘Arafah. Thus in this verse, Allah has taken oath by four objects: [1] 'the sky, the one having stellar formations'; [2] 'the Day of Judgement'; [3] 'Friday'; and [4] 'the Day of ‘Arafah'. The relationship between the objects of oath and the subject of oath is as follows: They bear evidence to the Divine omnipotence, and they are a proof of reckoning and reward and punishment on the Day of Judgement. Friday and the day of ‘Arafah (the main day of Hajj that is 9th Zul-Hijjah of the Islami Calender) are blessed days for the believers to accumulate treasures for the Hereafter. Further, the subject of oath curses the infidels who burned the Muslims on account of their faith, and gives cheerful news to the righteous believers of securing elevated ranks in the Hereafter.

The Story of the People of Trench

Verse 4 refers to the People of the Trench. Their story is recounted in a

Ḥadīth reported by Imām Muslim as follows: There was an infidel king who lived in bygone times. He had a soothsayer , or, according to some narrations, a magician. The infidel king is identified as the ruler of Yemen. His name, according to Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ, was Yūsuf Dhu Nuwās, and he lived about seventy years before the birth of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The soothsayer or magician [occult teacher] said to the king that he should be given an intelligent boy, so that he could train him in the skill of foretelling or the black magic. Accordingly, the king sent a boy, ‘Abdullāh Ibn Tāmīr by name, to be trained by the soothsayer or magician [occult teacher]. Whenever the boy went to his teacher, he had to pass by a Christian monk. He followed the true religion of ‘Isā ؑ and worshipped Allah. Since the religion of ‘Isā ؑ was the true religion in those days, the monk was, in fact, a Muslim. The boy sat with the monk and was very much impressed by his teachings. As a result, he frequented the monk's house and sat with him for long hours before proceeding to his teacher, and ultimately embraced Islam. Allah had blessed him with such a strong faith that he was prepared to bear any pain and persecution for the sake of Allah. His teacher used to beat him for his coming late. On his way back from the occult teacher, he would spend some time again with the monk and used to go home late. The family would then beat him up for being late. But he was so keen to have the company of the monk that he managed to sit regularly with the monk without fear of persecution. Through the blessings of this, Allah had gifted him with many miracles [*karamah*]. Once it happened that the boy saw a lion has blocked the path and prevented people from passing. They were perturbed. He picked a stone and prayed: "O Allah! If the religion of the monk is true, then kill this beast with this stone [so that people may pass]. And if the soothsayer or magician is true, then the beast must not die with my stone." So praying, he aimed at the lion and it died instantly. The news spread among the people that the boy possesses wonderful knowledge. A blind man heard about this and came up to him. He requested him to restore his sight. The boy conceded on the condition that he embraces Islam. The blind man agreed. The boy prayed and Allah restored his sight. The blind man became Muslim. The king came to know about these incidents, and he got the boy, the monk and the blind were apprehended. They were brought before the king. He got the blind and the monk killed, and ordered that the boy be taken to the summit of a mountain and be thrown

from there. But those who had taken him up there fell and died. The boy went home safely. Then the king ordered to have him drowned in the sea. The boy escaped safely, while the people who took him to the sea were drowned. The boy then himself told the king how to kill him. He told him to take an arrow from his quiver and place it in his bow, and reciting, بِاسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّبِّ 'In the name of Allah, my Lord' they should shoot. They did that and they boy finally died. In this way, the boy gave his life away but seeing this, the entire nation of the king cried out spontaneously: "We believe in Allah." At this, the king was greatly enraged and, after consultation with his cabinet, ordered for deep trenches to be dug and filled with fire. An announcement was then made that the people must renounce their faith in Allah. If they refuse, they would be thrown into the fiery furnace. Eventually, a woman carrying her infant child was brought to a trench, but she hesitated. Allah granted speech to her child who said: "O mother, be steadfast, because you are certainly on the truth." In this way, many people were burned. According to some reports, about twelve thousand people were burned to ashes and, according to other reports, the number is put more than this. Consequently, Divine wrath descended on the People of the Trench and fiery furnace. Reference in verse 4 is made to this incident after taking an oath.

In a narration of Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq, it is reported that the place where the boy ‘Abdullāh Ibn Tāmīr was buried had to be dug up for some important reason during the time of Sayyidnā ‘Umar رضي الله عنه. It was found that the body of ‘Abdullāh Ibn Tāmīr was intact, and he was sitting up. His hand was placed on his hip joint, where the arrow struck him. Someone moved his hand out from that place, and his wound started bleeding. When the hand was placed back in its position, the bleeding stopped. There was a ring in his finger which had the inscription: اللَّهُ رَبِّي "Allah is my Lord." The governor of Yemen informed Sayyidnā ‘Umar رضي الله عنه about this, and he wrote back in reply: "Bury the body back as it was with his finger-ring." [Ibn Kathīr]

Special Note

Ibn Kathīr, with reference to Ibn Abī Ḥātim, writes that the incidents of 'trenches of fire' took place many times in history in different parts of the world. Then Ibn Abī Ḥātim specifies three particular incidents: [1] a trench in Yemen. [This incident took place during the period of *fatrah*

(the interval between 'Isā عليه السلام and the Holy Prophet ﷺ), about seventy years before the advent of the Prophet ﷺ; [2] a trench in Syria; and [3] a trench in Irān. He further states that the incident the Qur'ān refers to here in Sūrah Burūj is the first one that occurred in Najrān, the trench of the kingdom of Yemen, because that was in Arabia.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ فَتَنُوا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَتُوبُوا (Surely, those who persecuted the believing men and the believing women, then did not repent,...85:10) This verse describes the torment of the wrong-doers who burned the Muslims in the fire pit only on account of their faith. The description points out two things: [1] فَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ جَهَنَّمَ (for them there is the torment of Jahannam) and [2] وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ الْحَرِيقِ (and for them there is the torment of burning). The second sentence may be treated as explicative of the first sentence, a statement for emphasis. It signifies that they will be put into Hell and will have to suffer eternal torment of the fire. Another possible interpretation is that the second statement describes the wrong-doers' torment in this world, as is narrated in some reports. The believers, who had been cast in fire pits, were spared the torture of fire, in that the souls of the believers were taken out before the fire could touch them. Only their dead bodies were lying in the fiery furnace. After that the fire flared up so high that it spread out wildly through the city and burned all those who were watching the fun of burning the Muslims. Only Yūsuf Dhu Nuwās managed to run away, and threw himself into the sea in order to save himself from the rage of the fire, but he got drowned and died. [Maẓharī].

Attached to the torment of Hell and the torment of burning for the wrong-doers is the restrictive phrase: ثُمَّ لَمْ يَتُوبُوا (then did not repent). That is, this torment is for those who did not repent of their deed and did not offer *taubah*. Thus this part of the verse invites people to repent. Sayyidnā Ḥasan رضي الله عنه states: "Look at Allah's compassion and benevolence. They burned Allah's friends alive, yet He invites them towards repentance and forgiveness." [Ibn Kathīr].

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Burūj
Ends here

Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭāriq (The Night-Comer)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 17 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 17

وَالسَّمَاءِ وَالطَّارِقِ ﴿١﴾ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الطَّارِقُ ﴿٢﴾ النَّجْمُ الثَّاقِبُ ﴿٣﴾
 إِنَّ كُلَّ نَفْسٍ لَّمَّا عَلَيْهَا حَافِظٌ ﴿٤﴾ فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ مِمَّ خُلِقَ ﴿٥﴾
 خُلِقَ مِنْ مَّاءٍ دَافِقٍ ﴿٦﴾ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ بَيْنِ الصُّلْبِ وَالتَّرَائِبِ ﴿٧﴾
 إِنَّهُ عَلَى رَجْعِهِ لَقَادِرٌ ﴿٨﴾ يَوْمَ تُبْلَى السَّرَائِرُ ﴿٩﴾ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ
 قُوَّةٍ وَلَا نَاصِرٍ ﴿١٠﴾ وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الرَّجْعِ ﴿١١﴾ وَالْأَرْضِ ذَاتِ
 الصَّدْعِ ﴿١٢﴾ إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ فَضْلٍ ﴿١٣﴾ وَمَا هُوَ بِالْهَزْلِ ﴿١٤﴾ إِنَّهُمْ
 يَكِيدُونَ كَيْدًا ﴿١٥﴾ وَآكِيدُ كَيْدًا ﴿١٦﴾ فَمَهْلِكُ الْكَافِرِينَ أَمْهَلُهُمْ
 رُوَيْدًا ﴿١٧﴾

I swear by the sky and the Night-Comer, [1] and what may let you know what the Night-Comer is? [2] The star of piercing brightness! [3] there is no human being, but there is a watcher over him. [4] So, let man consider of which stuff he is created. [5] He is created of a spouting water [6] that comes out from between the loins and the chest-bones. [7] Surely He is Powerful to bring him back [8] on a day when all the secrets will be searched out, [9] and he will have no strength (to defend), nor a supporter. [10] I swear by the sky that rains, [11] and

the earth that cracks open (for plants), [12] this is a decisive word, [13] and it is not a joke. [14] They are devising plans, [15] and I Am devising plans. [16] So leave the disbelievers at the moment; give them respite for a while. [17]

Commentary

After swearing an oath by the sky and stars, in this Sūrah, Allah asserts that He has assigned a guardian angel to every human being who watches over his deeds and actions, and accurate and immediate record is kept on the basis of which the reckoning will be made, and on the Day of Reckoning, all secrets will be revealed. The rational conclusion is that man must ponder over the consequences of the deeds he is doing in this life. Therefore, he should not, at any moment of his life, lose sight of what is to happen on the Day of Reckoning. Thereafter, the verse disposes of a doubt that the Satan perennially casts into the people's hearts. When they are dead and have become dust and decomposed particles, how will they be recomposed and life be brought back? This seems to be an imaginary thought, rather, in the view of the general public, it is impossible. In answer to this doubt, man is invited to reflect on his origin. At the inception, he was created from various elements collected from throughout the world, and Allah's Power transformed them into a human being who is able to listen and see. Allah Who has created him and looked after him is well able to bring him back to life after death. Then some events of the Day of Judgement are mentioned. Then, after swearing an oath by the earth and the sky, the negligent man is told that the Hereafter he is urged to care about is no joke or amusement, but it is a reality that has to come to pass. Towards the end of the Sūrah, the unbelievers pose the question: If Allah abhors disbelief, idolatry and sins, why then does He not punish us in this life? The Sūrah ends with a rebuttal to this question. Let us now explain some expressions used in the Sūrah:

The first oath, in the beginning of the Sūrah, is by the sky and *ṭāriq*. The word *ṭāriq* means the 'Night-Comer'. Stars normally disappear during the day and only appear at night, therefore they are called *ṭāriq*. The Qur'an itself raises the question:

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الطَّارِقُ (and what may let you know what the Night-Comer is?...86:2) and then answers the question thus: النُّجُومُ الثَّاقِبُ (The star of

piercing brightness!...86:3). The word *najm* means 'star'. The Qur'ān does not specify any particular 'star'. Therefore, it may be applied to any star. Some of the commentators say that *najm* refers to the Pleiades or Saturn, and they quote specimens of Arabic speech to confirm their argument. The word *thāqib* means 'piercing brightness'.

إِنَّ كُلَّ نَفْسٍ لَّمَّا عَلَيْهَا حَافِظٌ (there is no human being, but there is a watcher over him...86:4). This is the subject of the oath. The particle *in* at the beginning of the statement is used in the sense of 'no', that is, a negative particle; and the particle *lammā* is used in the sense of 'but/except', that is, it is an exceptive particle in the dialect of Baṁ Hudhail. The verse purports to say that there is not a single person over whom there is not a watcher [*ḥāfiẓ*]. The word *ḥāfiẓ* may mean 'guardian' who may watch over someone's actions and deeds, so that the reckoning is made on that basis. The word *ḥāfiẓ* may also be used in the sense of 'one who protects from calamities'. In the first sense, the word *hafiz* refers to the angels who record the deeds. Here the word *ḥāfiẓ*, although appears in the singular form, it is used in the generic sense, because there is not just a single recording angel, but there is a host of them as another verse testifies to this fact:

إِنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ لَحَافِظِينَ كَرَامًا كَثِيرِينَ

'While [appointed] over you there are watchers, who are noble,
the writers [of the deeds], [82: 10-11]'

According to the second sense of the word, *ḥāfiẓ* refers to the angels who have been appointed to protect man from all kinds of calamities that befall him day and night, except the calamities that Allah has decreed for him, as the following verse explicitly states:

لَهُ مُعَقِّبَاتٌ مِّنْ أَيْمَنِ يَدِهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ يَحْفَظُونَهُ، مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ

'For him there are angels replacing each other, before him and behind him, who guard him under the command of Allah [13:11]

A tradition has reported the Messenger of Allah ﷺ saying that Allah has appointed three hundred and sixty angels for every believer. They protect every limb of his. Of the three hundred and sixty, seven angels alone protect man's eye. These angels defend man from every calamity that is not decreed, like a fan chases away the flies coming to a vessel containing honey. If there are no security guards for man, the devils will

snatch them away. [Qurṭubī].

خُلِقَ مِنْ مَّاءٍ دَافِقٍ يُخْرُجُ مِنْ بَيْنِ الصُّلْبِ وَالتَّرَائِبِ (He is created of a spouting water that comes out from between the loins and the chest-bones...86:6,7). The general body of commentators have explained that the spouting water (sperm) comes out from the loins of men and the chest-bones of women. However, the research of embryological science on the subject shows that the seminal fluid comes out from every part of human body, and every part of the foetus is made of the seminal fluid that has come out from that part of the man's and woman's body. The brain, of course, plays the greatest role in this matter. Thus experience shows that people who indulge in excessive cohabitation mostly suffer from weakness of mental weakness. The embryologists have at the same time discovered that the seminal fluid separates from all parts of the body, and through the spinal cord, collects in the testes and from there it spouts.

If these findings have any value, it is not far-fetched to reconcile them with the explanation of some of the commentators. Embryologists agree that the brain plays the most important role in the preparation of seminal fluid. The representative of the brain is the spinal cord that has come into the backbone from the brain, up to the loins and the testes. Some of its branches have come into the chest-bones. It is likely that the seminal fluid coming from the chest-bones into the woman's seminal fluid and the seminal fluid coming from the loins into a man's seminal fluid have a greater role to play. (Baidawi)

If we analyse the verse of the Qur'ān carefully, we notice that it does not specify 'man or woman'. It merely says 'He is created of a spouting water that comes out from between the loins and the chest-bones.' This may simply signify that the seminal fluid comes out from the entire body of both men and women. The expression 'the entire body' is understood from the mention of the principal organs of front and back. The front part of the body is chest and the back part of the body is the loin. These are the principal parts of the body. The expression, 'the spouting water that comes out from between the loins and the chest-bones' may mean 'comes out from the entire body'.

إِنَّهُ عَلَى رَجْعِهِ لَقَادِرٌ (Surely He is Powerful to bring him back...86:8) The word *rajf* means 'to bring back'. The verse signifies that Allah Who has

created him from a drop of seminal fluid is well able to bring him back to life after death a fortiori.

يَوْمَ تُبْلَى السَّرَائِرُ (on a day when all the secrets will be searched out..86:9). The word *tubla* literally means 'to test/examine' and *sarā'ir* means 'secrets'. On the Day of Reckoning, the secrets will be tested and examined and laid bare. Man's beliefs, his thoughts, and his motives and intentions that were hidden in this life, and no one knew about them, will be revealed in the Hereafter.

Likewise, his deeds and actions that he had done secretly, and no one was aware of them in this world, all of them will be tested and scrutinised on the Plain of Gathering and will be laid bare. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه has said that on the Day of Judgement Allah will disclose the secrets of all human beings. The sign of every good or bad belief and action will be displayed on man's face, in the form of beauty or darkness or gloom [depending on each individual's situation]. [Qurṭubī].

وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الرَّجْعِ (I swear by the sky that rains...86:11) The word *raj'* refers to 'the rain that comes down repeatedly'. In other words, the rain that comes down and stops and then returns.

إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلٌ فَضْلٌ (this is a decisive word..86:13) In other words, the Qur'an is truly a Decisive Word that decides between truth and falsehood, and there is no room for any doubt in it.

Sayyidnā 'Alī رضي الله عنه says that he heard the Holy Prophet ﷺ as saying about the Holy Qur'an:

كتاب فيه خبر ما قبلكم وحكم ما بعدكم وهو الفصل ليس بالهزل

'[It is] a book which describes the stories of past communities and [it contains] injunctions for future generations. It is truly a Decisive Word. It is no joke.'

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭāriq
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Aʿlā (The Most Exalted)

This Sūrah is Makki, and it has 19 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 19

سَبِّحْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى ﴿١﴾ الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسَوَّى ﴿٢﴾ وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ
 فَهَدَى ﴿٣﴾ وَالَّذِي أَخْرَجَ الْمَرْعَى ﴿٤﴾ فَجَعَلَهُ غُثَاءً أَحْوَى ﴿٥﴾
 سَنُقْرِئُكَ فَلَا تَنْسَى ﴿٦﴾ إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ ۚ إِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْجَهْرَ وَمَا
 يَخْفَى ﴿٧﴾ وَنُيْسِرُكَ لِلْيُسْرَى ﴿٨﴾ فَذَكَرْ إِنَّ نَفْعَ الْذِكْرِىٰ ﴿٩﴾
 سَيَذَكِّرُ مَنْ يَخْشَى ﴿١٠﴾ وَيَتَجَنَّبُهَا الْأَشْقَى ﴿١١﴾ الَّذِي يَصْلَى
 النَّارَ الْكُبْرَى ﴿١٢﴾ ثُمَّ لَا يَمُوتُ فِيهَا وَلَا يَحْيَىٰ ﴿١٣﴾ قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ
 تَزَكَّى ﴿١٤﴾ وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى ﴿١٥﴾ بَلْ تُؤْثِرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا
 ﴿١٦﴾ وَالْآخِرَةَ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰ ﴿١٧﴾ إِنَّ هَذَا لَفِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَىٰ
 ﴿١٨﴾ صُحُفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَىٰ ﴿١٩﴾

Pronounce the purity of the name of your Most Exalted Lord, [1] who created (everything), then made (it) well, [2] and who determined a measure (for everything), then guided (it), [3] and who brought forth pasturage, [4] then turned it into blackening stubble. [5] We will make you recite, then you will not forget [6] except that which Allah wills. Indeed He knows what is manifest and what is hidden. [7] And We will facilitate for you (to reach)

the easiest way. [8] So, extend advice (to people) if advice is useful. [9] The one who fears (Allah) will take to the advice, [10] and it will be avoided by the most wretched [11] who will enter the Biggest Fire, [12] then he will neither die therein, nor live (a life worth mentioning). [13] Success is surely achieved by him who purifies himself, [14] and pronounces the name of his Lord, then offers prayer. [15] But you prefer the worldly life, [16] while the Hereafter is much better and much more durable. [17] Indeed this is (written) in the earlier divine scripts, [18] the scripts of Ibrahim and Musa. [19]

Commentary

Ruling [1]

Scholars have ruled that when anyone recites the verse: سُبِّحَ اسْمُ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى (Pronounce the purity of the name of your most exalted Lord...87:1) it is commendable to say:

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْأَعْلَى

'I pronounce the purity of my most exalted Lord.'

This was the practice of all the noble Companions, like Sayyidna 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbaā, Ibn 'Umar, Ibn Zubair, Abū Mūsā and 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضى الله عنهم اجمعين. Whenever they started reciting the Sūrah, they would recite:

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْأَعْلَى

'I pronounce the purity of my most exalted Lord.' [Qurṭubī].

It should be noted that the desirability of reciting this is outside of the prayer.

Ruling [2]

Sayyidnā 'Uqbah Ibn 'Āmir Al-Juhānī رضى الله عنه narrates that when the Sūrah Al-A'la was revealed, the Holy Prophet ﷺ instructed:

اجعلوها فى سجودكم

'Say this (Subḥāna Rabbiyal-A'la) in your *sujūd* [prostrations]'

سُبِّحَ اسْمُ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى (Pronounce the purity of the name of your Most exalted Lord.) The word *tasbiḥ* means 'to pronounce the purity' and سُبِّحَ اسْمُ رَبِّكَ signifies to 'honour the name of your Lord'. When the name of Allah is pronounced, it should be done with utmost humility and respect.

His name should be kept pure and free from anything that is unbecoming to His sublime status. Allah should be called by the names He Himself has stated or taught the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It is not permitted to call Him by any other name.

Ruling [3]

Besides, it is also included in the above imperative that there are some names exclusively meant for Allah; calling human beings or any other creation by those specific names is contrary to declaring the purity of Allah. Therefore, it is not permissible. [Qurtubī]. Nowadays, people are not particular about names like 'Abdur Raḥmān, 'Abdur-Razzāq, 'Abdul Ghaffār and 'Abdul Quddūs. They call the persons bearing these names 'Raḥmān', 'Razzāq', 'Ghaffār', 'Quddus' and so on, for short. People have got into the habit of shortening such names without realising that the speakers as well as the listeners are committing a sin. People commit this joyless sin day and night without any reason.

Some commentators interpret the word '*ism*' does not mean 'name' in this verse. Instead, they say, it is referring to the *Dhāt* or the 'Being' of Allah. According to the Arabic expressions, this interpretation is not unlikely, and the Qur'ān has used the word '*ism*' in that sense also. The Ḥadīth that instructs us to recite the *tasbīḥ* in *sajdah* [prostration] is not "I pronounce the purity of the name of my most exalted Lord, but "I pronounce the purity of my most exalted Lord". This indicates that in this context '*ism*' is not used in the sense of 'name' but it refers to the Being of Allah Himself. [Qurtubī]

Subtle and Profound Wisdom in the Creation of the Universe

الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسَوَّى وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَى (who created [everything], then made [it] well, and who determined a measure [for everything], then guided [it]...87:2,3). All these are the attributes of the 'Most Exalted Lord'. The first attribute is *khalāqa* which does not simply mean 'to make' or 'manufacture'. It has a deeper significance: 'to bring out something from pure non-existence into the realm of existence without the help of any pre-existing matter'. (This is the correct meaning of 'creation'. If something is made with the help of some pre-existing matter, it cannot be called 'creation' in its original sense.) This is not within the power of anyone else. Only the perfect power of Allah can bring things into existence, whenever He wills, without the help of any pre-existing matter.

The second attribute, which is connected with *takhliq* (creation), is *sawwā*. This word is derived from *taswiyah*, and it literally means 'to make well or equal'. The verse signifies that Allah made the constitution of everything symmetrical or made it congruously consistent in its several parts, the body structure, shape and size, limbs and organs. Man and every other animal is adapted to the requirements of wisdom. The hands and legs, the tips of the fingers and toes have joints with different types of springy connective tissues that make it possible to bend and fold in different ways. If we look at another limb or organ of human body, its symmetry and balance baffles our imagination and is sufficient for us to believe in the consummate wisdom and power of the Creator of the universe.

The third attribute is *qaddara* which is derived from *taqdīr* and it means 'to determine; to measure; to balance; to design symmetrically; to decree/ decide'. The word is used in the last sense here. The verse purports to say that things in the world have not been created without purpose. Everything has been created for a specific purpose, and has been endowed with natural capacities to fit its function. If we look carefully, the principle does not apply only to specific species. Every member of the universe has been assigned a specific function to perform. We witness the manifestation of the assignments in the sky, the stars, lightning, rain, humans, animals, vegetation and minerals.

Maulānā Rūmī رحمه الله تعالى says:

خاک و باد و آب و آتش بنده اند..... با من و تو مُردہ با حق زندہ اند

"The earth, the wind, the water and the fire—all of them are slaves of Allah.

According to me and you, they are senseless, but according to Allah, all of them are alive and sensible.

Allah has especially geared man and every species of animals to do particular works and they perform them according to their natural inclination, and their predisposition pivots around their respective tasks.

ہر یکے را بہر کارے ساختند..... میل اور اور دلش اند اختند

Allah has created everything for a particular purpose
And has filled its heart with inclination towards it.

The fourth attribute of Allah is *fa-hadā* 'then guided it'. In other words, The Creator of the universe did not create things and left them to their own mercy to perform their particular function as they like, but they are shown the way in which they should be performed. As a matter of fact, He guided the entire creation by equipping each member of it with suitable nature to function for which it was created, whether the member is the sky or celestial creation, or it is the earth or the earthly creation. They all possess a special type of sense, though it is of a lower than that of man. The Qur'ān says:

رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ، ثُمَّ هَدَى

'Our Lord is He Who gave to each thing its form and nature, then guided it aright . [20:50]'

As a result, since the inception of their creation, the skies, the earth, the stars and planets, mountains and oceans are all performing their functions accurately, without any failure or deviation. Humans and animals, in particular, whose intellect and sensibility can be observed easily, have been invested with capabilities of fulfilling their minute needs and repelling harmful things in a way that baffles the one who thinks about it. Since man possesses sense and intelligence of a higher degree, his capabilities may not be so much surprising, but let us look into wild animals, ferocious animals or beasts of prey, birds and insects. Each and everyone of them is able to obtain its necessities of life. They are able to find their habitats. They have not acquired the skills of fulfilling their individual and communal needs through a teacher that may educate or train them, nor did they need any school or college to acquire this knowledge and skill. Their education and training comes directly from the Creator of the universe. It is this divine guidance that has been referred to in the Holy Qur'ān by saying,

رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ، ثُمَّ هَدَى

'Our Lord is He Who gave to each thing its form and nature, then guided it aright . [20:50]'

and in this Sūrah thus:

وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَى

'and who determined a measure (for everything), then guided (it), [3]'

The Knowledge of Science is a Divine Gift to Man

Allah has equipped man with the higher order of intelligence and sense. The entire universe is made subservient to him,___the earth, mountains and oceans and everything created therein are made to serve man and created for his benefit. However, full advantage of them is not possible unless man acquires knowledge and skill to put various things together and produce a new item. Nature has provided man with intelligence and understanding to excavate mountains and dive into the oceans to obtain minerals and marine objects. He composes certain items like wood, iron, steel, copper, brass and so on and makes new items of his need. This knowledge and technology is not dependent on scientific research and college or university education. Even illiterate people have been doing this since the inception of human existence . This is intrinsic science that Allah has endowed upon man as a natural gift. Later, man developed the capability of doing technical and scientific research. He thus made progress in various fields of science and technology. The capability to do this is also a Divine gift.

Obviously, science and technology does not create anything, but it merely shows the way to use the created things. The initial knowledge about their use is taught by Allah, but there is a wide scope to make progress in it by the capabilities Allah has bestowed to man, the manifestation of which we are witnessing in this scientific age day by day, and what further range of these abilities and talents will manifest in future is unknown. All this is the interpretation of *hadā* '[He] guided (it), [3] In other words, Allah has placed in them potentials and capabilities to perform their natural functions. But alas! the scientists are getting more and more negligent, rather blind to these realities day by day.

وَالَّذِي أَخْرَجَ الْمَرْعَىٰ. فَجَعَلَهُ غُثَاءً أَحْوَىٰ (and who brought forth pasturage, then turned it into a blackening stubble....87:4, 5)

The word *marʿā* means 'pasturage'. This is the land that has grass growing on it, and that is used for animals to graze. The word *ghuthā'* refers to 'stubble, and scum borne upon the surface of a torrent'. The word *aḥwā* is derived from the root *ḥuwwah* which refers to 'a kind of black colour that comes upon a dense vegetation'. The verse purports to depict the Divine power and wisdom related to herbage and vegetation. He grows the green vegetation and then He gradually turns it into black

colour, and it loses its freshness. This directs man's attention also to his end. His body radiating with health, beauty, smartness and alertness is a Divine gift, but its tenure of life is limited. Eventually it will come to an end.

إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ سَنُقَرِّئُكَ فَلَا تَنْسَى. (We will make you recite, then you will not forget, except that which Allah wills. Indeed He knows what is manifest and what is hidden....87:6,7). In the preceding verses, Allah depicted the manifestation of His Omnipotence and [profound] wisdom. Thereafter, a few guidelines are given to the Holy Prophet ﷺ regarding his prophetic obligation. Before putting forth the guidelines, he is given the cheerful news of making his task easier. When the Qur'ān was revealed initially, and as Jibrā'il عليه السلام began to recite, the Holy Prophet ﷺ made haste to repeat, lest any word or sentence should be lost. He was, therefore, told not to make haste with it, and to wait until the angel had delivered the whole message, and then to repeat the words of the revelation, being assured that it was a Divine arrangement, and that nothing would be lost. On this occasion, he is still more plainly told: 'then you will not forget, except that which Allah wills.'

While Allah made the Holy Prophet ﷺ remember all of the Qur'ān, there were certain verses which Allah made him forget, because they had been abrogated. This was done by Allah's command, and is not done without reason. There are several ways in which this is done. One way of doing this is that a second clear injunction is revealed contrary to the first injunction. Another way of abrogating a particular verse is to obliterate a verse from the memory of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the memory of all other Muslims, as stated in:

مَا نَنْسَخْ مِنْ آيَةٍ أَوْ نُنسِهَا

'Whenever We abrogate a verse or cause it to be forgotten.
[2:106]'

Some scholars interpret the exceptive sentence 'except that which Allah wills' differently. They say that for some reason Allah blots out temporarily a verse from Holy Prophet's ﷺ memory, but he may remember it again, in support of which the following narrative may be adduced: One day the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited a Sūrah, but omitted one of the verses. Sayyidnā Ubayy Ibn Ka'b رضي الله عنه, one of the Prophet's scribes,

was present. He thought it might have been abrogated. On inquiry, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that it was not abrogated, but that it was omitted by mistake. [Qurtubī]. In this interpretation, it may be summarised that forgetting a verse temporarily, and then remembering it again, does not go against the promise made in this verse. [In fact, it is an exception from this promise.] Allah knows best!

وَنُيَسِّرْكَ لِلْيُسْرَى (And We will facilitate for you [to reach] the easiest way....87:8). The phrase 'the easiest way' refers to the sacred laws of Islam. Apparently, according to the demand of the context, it should have been stated 'We will make the Shari'ah easy for you'. But the Qur'an chose, instead, to state 'And We will facilitate for you (to reach) the easiest way. [8]'. The reason for that, probably, is to indicate that Allah will predispose him to the sacred laws, so that they will become part of his nature, and he will become an embodiment of Shari'ah.

فَذَكِّرْ إِن نَّفَعَتِ الذِّكْرَى (So, extend advice [to people] if advice is useful....87:9) The preceding verses described the facilities created by Allah for the Holy Prophet ﷺ in performing his Prophetic obligation. This verse commands him to perform his obligation. The verse contains the conditional particle 'in' (if) that apparently makes the sentence a conditional statement. But, in fact, the command is not intended to be made conditional. It is rather an emphatic statement. This is similar to the grammatical phenomenon in many languages. The particle 'if' is sometimes used when something is always true. It is used for introducing a situation that always has the same meaning, result or effect. For example: "If you are a 'man' [obviously he is a man], then you will have to do this work," In neither of such sentences, the particle 'if' is conditional, but rather emphatic. Likewise, the verse purports to say that preaching truth and righteousness is certainly useful. Therefore, the beneficial thing should never be abandoned at anytime.

فَذَاقْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّى (Success is surely achieved by him who purifies himself,...87:14) The word *tazakkā* is derived from *zakāh*, the primitive meaning of which is 'to purify'. The *zakāh* of wealth is so called because it purifies the rest of man's wealth for him. In this context, the word *tazakkā* is used in a general sense, which comprehends the purity of faith and character, and purity of wealth.

وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى (and pronounces the name of his Lord, then offers prayer....87:15). This covers all categories of prayer, obligatory as well as supererogatory. Some commentators say that it refers especially to 'Id prayers. This interpretation too can fall under the preceding category.

بَلْ تُوْثِرُوْنَ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا (But you prefer the worldly life,...87:16). Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه says that people generally prefer the worldly blessings and comforts to the blessings and comforts of the Hereafter, because the former is visible and readily available, while the latter is invisible and unavailable readily. People unaware of reality preferred the visible to the invisible, which became the cause of eternal loss. In order to spare them the eternal loss, Allah, through His Messengers and Books, described to them the blessings and comforts of the Hereafter so clearly as if they can perceive them [through their sense organs]. It has been made plain to them that what they think is readily available and preferred, is actually fragile and will very soon perish. It is unwise to put one's heart into, or faith in, it and waste one's energy on it. Thus the Qur'an says:

وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى (while the Hereafter is much better and much more durable...87:17). The verse purports to warn those who prefer this life to the Hereafter that they should use their intelligence to find out what they have preferred and what they have abandoned. They are, first of all, made to realise that the highest degree of comfort and pleasure in this life is not free from the mixture of grief and hardship. In the second place, it is not permanent. We experience in our daily life that a king of today becomes a pauper tomorrow. A vigorous youth of today becomes old tomorrow. In the Hereafter, on the other hand, there will be freedom from both these defects. All its blessings and comforts will be 'much better' and they cannot be compared to the blessings and comforts of this life. Most importantly, it is *abqa* 'much more durable'.

Let us consider the following scenario: It is said to a person that there are two houses in front of him, one of which is a magnificent mansion, fully furnished and another an ordinary, substandard house, not properly furnished. He has the choice to take the mansion, but only for a month or two. Thereafter, he will have to vacate the mansion. Or he may take the underdeveloped house that he will own permanently. Which of the two houses a wise person will prefer? The answer is obvious that he will prefer the second option. On this analogy, one should prefer the blessings of the

Hereafter even if, for argument's sake, they are substandard, because they are permanent and eternal. But the fact is that they are not only permanent, but also much better and far more superior to the worldly comforts. In this situation only an unfortunate fool will prefer the blessings of this life to the bounties of the Hereafter.

إِنَّ هَذَا لَفِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَى صُحُفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى (Indeed this is [written] in the earlier divine scripts, the scripts of Ibrāhīm and Mūsā....87:18, 19) In other words, either all the themes of this Sūrah or its last theme, that the Hereafter is much better and much more durable than this life, was written in the earlier Divine scriptures. It is further explicated that this theme was written in the scriptures of Prophets Ibrāhīm and Mūsā (عليه السلام). Probably, it refers to other scriptures that were given to Prophet Mūsā (عليه السلام) before Torah. It is also possible that it refers to Torah itself.

Themes of the Scripts of Prophet Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام)

Ājurri transmits a narration from Sayyidnā Abū Dharr Al-Ghifārī (رضي الله عنه) that he inquired from the Prophet (ﷺ) as to the contents of the scripts of Prophet Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام) and the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) replied that they contained educating parables. A story is told in it about a tyrant king where he is addressed and told: You haughty, arrogant and oppressive ruler! I did not give you kingdom so that you may amass wealth, but I had given you power so that you may let the supplication of the oppressed against the oppressor reach me, because my law does not reject the supplication of an oppressed, even though it may be uttered by an unbeliever.

Another parable addresses the general public thus: A wise person should divide his time into three parts. One part should be reserved for the worship of his Lord and supplication to Him. The second part should be reserved for self-assessment of his deeds, and reflection on the Omnipotence and creation of Allah. The third part should be allocated for acquisition of livelihood and fulfilling the natural needs. It further imparts that a wise person should keep himself abreast of the circumstances of his time, and keep himself busy in performing his intended work. He should take care of his tongue. He who takes speech as one of his works, his speech will be confined only to the things of real need.

Themes of the Scripts of Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام

Sayyidnā Abū Dharr Al-Ghifārī رضي الله عنه says that he then inquired from the Holy Prophet ﷺ as to the contents of the scripts of Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام and the Holy Prophet ﷺ replied that they contained lessons of wisdom. Some of them are as follows:

- I am surprised at the person who believes that he will certainly die, and yet he is lives happily.
- I am surprised at the person who believes in Divine destiny, and yet he is despondent and aggrieved.
- I am surprised at the person who experiences the vicissitudes of life and rise and fall of nations, and yet he is content with the world.
- I am surprised at the person who believes in the Reckoning of the Hereafter, and yet he abandons [good] deeds.

Sayyidnā Abū Dharr Al-Ghifārī رضي الله عنه says that he asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ whether anything from these scriptures was revealed to him, he replied in the affirmative and asked Sayyidnā Abū Dharr Ghifārī رضي الله عنه to recite verses 14-19 of this Sūrah. [Qurṭubī]

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-A'la
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Ghāshiyah (The Overwhelming Event)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 26 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 26

هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ الْغَاشِيَةِ ﴿١﴾ وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ خَاشِعَةٌ ﴿٢﴾ عَامِلَةٌ
 نَاصِبَةٌ ﴿٣﴾ تَصَلَّى نَارًا حَامِيَةً ﴿٤﴾ تُسْقَى مِنْ عَيْنٍ آنِيَةٍ ﴿٥﴾ لَيْسَ
 لَهُمْ طَعَامٌ إِلَّا مِنْ ضَرِيعٍ ﴿٦﴾ لَا يُسْمِنُ وَلَا يُغْنِي مِنْ جُوعٍ ﴿٧﴾
 وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَاعِمَةٌ ﴿٨﴾ لِسَعْيِهَا رَاضِيَةٌ ﴿٩﴾ فِي جَنَّةٍ عَالِيَةٍ ﴿١٠﴾ لَا
 تَسْمَعُ فِيهَا لَاغِيَةً ﴿١١﴾ فِيهَا عَيْنٌ جَارِيَةٌ ﴿١٢﴾ فِيهَا سُرُرٌ مَرْفُوعَةٌ
 ﴿١٣﴾ وَأَكْوَابٌ مَوْضُوعَةٌ ﴿١٤﴾ وَنَمَارِقُ مَصْفُوفَةٌ ﴿١٥﴾ وَزَرَابِيُّ
 مَبْثُوثَةٌ ﴿١٦﴾ أَفَلَا يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَى الْإِبِلِ كَيْفَ خُلِقَتْ ﴿١٧﴾ وَإِلَى
 السَّمَاءِ كَيْفَ رُفِعَتْ ﴿١٨﴾ وَإِلَى الْجِبَالِ كَيْفَ نُصِبَتْ ﴿١٩﴾ وَإِلَى
 الْأَرْضِ كَيْفَ سُطِحَتْ ﴿٢٠﴾ فَذَكِّرْ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُذَكِّرٌ ﴿٢١﴾ لَسْتَ
 عَلَيْهِمْ بِمُصَيْطِرٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ إِلَّا مَنْ تَوَلَّى وَكَفَرَ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَيَعَذِّبُهُ اللَّهُ الْعَذَابَ
 الْأَكْبَرَ ﴿٢٤﴾ إِنَّ إِلَيْنَا إِيَابَهُمْ ﴿٢٥﴾ ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا حِسَابَهُمْ ﴿٢٦﴾

Has there come to you the description of the Overwhelming Event? [1] Many faces on that day will be humbled, [2] working hard, exhausted. [3] They will enter

into the scorching fire. [4] They will be made to drink water from a boiling spring. [5] There will be no food for them except from a thorny plant [6] that will neither nourish, nor satisfy hunger. [7] Many faces on that day will be full of glamour, [8] well pleased with their endeavour, [9] in a lofty garden, [10] in which they will not hear any absurd talk. [11] In it there is a running spring. [12] In it there are couches, elevated, [13] and goblets, well placed [14] and cushions, arrayed [15] and carpets, spread around. [16]

So, do they not look at the camels how they are created, [17] and at the sky, how it is raised high, [18] and at the mountains, how they are installed, [19] and at the earth, how it is spread out? [20] So, keep on preaching; you are only a preacher. [21] You are not a taskmaster set up over them, [22] but whoever turns away and disbelieves, [23] Allah will punish him with the greatest torment. [24] Surely towards Us they have to return, [25] then it is Our job to call them to account. [26]

Commentary

وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ خَاشِعَةٌ. عَامِلَةٌ نَّاصِبَةٌ (Many faces on that day will be humbled, working hard, exhausted...88:3). On the Day of Judgement, there will be two separate groups of people, believers and unbelievers, and their faces will be different. This verse describes the faces of the unbelievers. They will be downcast. The word *khāshī'ah* from the root word *khushā'* means 'to humble, humiliate, cast down'. This is the meaning of casting oneself down before Allah in prayer. People who did not cast themselves down before Allah in this world, their faces on the Day of Judgement will be downcast with humiliation and disgrace .

The other conditions of the unbelievers are *'āmilah* and *nāṣibah*. The word *'āmilah* from *'āmal* means 'to work hard' and *'āmil* or *'āmilah* in Arabic is used for 'a person who works continuously, so as to become completely tired'. The word *nāṣibah* is derived from *nasab*. This word also refers to 'one who toils unceasingly so as to become totally exhausted'. It seems that the latter two conditions of the unbelievers relate to this world, because Hereafter is not a realm in which one has to work to become so tired and exhausted. Therefore, Qurṭubī and other commentators are of the view that the humbleness of their faces relates to the Hereafter, but their working hard and being exhausted refers to their work in this world. Given this interpretation, the sense is that many unbelievers exert

themselves in their false rituals, and work hard in their presumed acts of worship in the world, as for instance the Hindu Yogis and many Christian monks do. They endure many difficulties in the devotional acts of worship sincerely in order to seek the good pleasure of Allah, but being on wrong and idolatrous ways, they are not acceptable to, or rewarded by, Allah. Thus their faces show signs of exhaustion in this world; and in the Hereafter they will show signs of disgrace and humiliation.

Sayyidnā Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى reports that when Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ went to Syria, a Christian monk came to him. He was an old man, and on account of his religious exercises and great endeavours, his face was exhausted, his body was dry and his dressing was miserable. When Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ looked at him, he began to weep. People asked him about the cause of his weeping. He replied: "I pity the condition of this old man. This poor soul worked so hard and showed such readiness to lay down his life to achieve a particular purpose (that is, to gain the pleasure of Allah) but, alas! He could not achieve it. Then he recited the following verse:

وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ خَاشِعَةٌ. عَامِلَةٌ نَّاصِبَةٌ

Many faces on that day will be humbled, 'working hard, exhausted. [88:2-3]

نَارًا حَامِيَةً (...[the] scorching fire...88:4). The word *ḥāmiyah* literally means 'hot' and 'scorching'. Although this is the natural property of fire that needed no mention, yet the specific reference to this quality of the fire brings out the point that the fire of Hell cannot be compared to the fire of this world. The heat of the fire of this world, some time or the other, is reduced or ends. But the fire of Hell is everlasting and eternal. Its heat will neither reduce nor end.

لَيْسَ لَهُمْ طَعَامٌ إِلَّا مِنْ ضَرِيعٍ (There will be no food for them except from a thorny plant...88:6) The only food available for the inmates of Hell would be *ḍarī'*. In the world, this is a kind of thorny grass that spreads on the ground. No animal goes near it. It is foul-smelling, poisonous and thorny. [As interpreted by 'Ikrimah, Mujāhid, and quoted by Qurṭubī].

How will Grass or Tree Survive in Hell

One may ask the question that the grass or trees are among things that burn in fire. How will they survive in Hellfire? The answer is that

the Supreme Creator Who cherished and sustained them in this world with water and air, has the power and ability to make the fire itself the nutrient of these trees, so that they may flourish.

Another question may be raised here. The Qur'ān mentions several things as the food of the inmates of Hell. Here it refers to their food as *ḍarī'*. On another occasion, it refers to *zaqqūm*, and on a third occasion it refers to *ghislīn*. This verse restricts their food to *ḍarī'*, thus: 'There will be no food for them except from a thorny plant...88:6)

The answer is that the restriction in this verse is in contrast to a palatable food that may be fit for [human] consumption. *Ḍarī'* is cited here as an example. The verse means that the inmates of Hell will not get any palatable food. They will get worst, most disgusting and loathsome food like *ḍarī'*. Thus the purpose of mentioning *ḍarī'* is not restriction. In fact, *ḍarī'* includes *zaqqūm* and *ghislīn*. Qurṭubī says that it is possible there will be different levels in Hell, and on different levels there will be different kinds of food. On one level, there will be *ḍarī'* and on another level, *ghislīn*, and so on.

لَا يُسْمِنُ وَلَا يُغْنِي مِنْ جُوعٍ (that will neither nourish, nor satisfy hunger...88:7). When the preceding verse was revealed in which it was stated that the inmates of Hell will get food like *ḍarī'*, some of the pagans of Makkah [mockingly] said that their camels eat *ḍarī'* and yet they are fat and healthy. In response to their statement, the following verse of the Qur'ān was revealed which means that they should not compare the *ḍarī'* of this world with that of the Hereafter. The latter will neither provide nutrition, nor satisfy their hunger.

لَا تَسْمَعُ فِيهَا لَاغِيَةً (in which they will not hear any absurd talk...88:11). It includes the words of disbelief, futile or idle talk, obscene language, calumny or false accusation, or any other talk that hurts people's feelings. On another occasion, the Qur'ān puts it thus:

لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا وَلَا تَأْثِيمًا

'They will hear neither an absurd talk therein, nor something leading to sin, [56:25]

This shows that false accusation and absurd talks are hurtful. That is why the Holy Qur'ān has described it as a blessing to the inmates of Paradise that no such foolish words will come across their ears that may

pollute their hearts.

Etiquette of Living

وَآكَوَابٌ مُّوضُوعَةٌ (and goblets, well placed...88:14) The word *akwāb* is the plural of *kūb* and it refers to a 'goblet', a 'glass' or a cup for drinking water. It has been qualified by the adjective *mauḍū'ah* and it means 'well placed'. This signifies that the glasses or cups or containers will be set in their due places close to water. This description opens an important chapter in setting down some of the rules of correct behaviour in social situations. The drinking containers for water ought to be placed near the water in the designated place. They should not be misplaced so that the other members of the household will have to look for them when they wish to drink water. This situation is irritating. Other household items of daily use, such as cans, glasses, towels, and so on, should be arranged in their designated places, and after using them, they must be kept back in their respective places, so that the other members of the household do not face any difficulty in finding them out. All this is deducible from the word *mauḍū'ah* 'well placed', because Allah has arranged the goblets near the water for the comfort of the inmates of Paradise.

أَفَلَا يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَى الْإِبِلِ كَيْفَ خُلِقَتْ (So, do they not look at the camels how they are created...88:17) The Qur'ān first described the conditions of the Hereafter; and it then went on to depict the reward of the believers and the retribution of the unbelievers. Now it turns attention to rebuff the obdurate unbelievers' foolish denial of the Hereafter. They reject it on the ground that after death and decomposition of the body and bones it is inconceivable that they would be recomposed and resurrected. For their guidance, Allah invites their attention to reflect carefully on a few of His Signs. There are uncountable Signs of Allah in the universe. These verses refer to four of them specifically which suited the condition of the desert Arabs. They often travelled through the desert. In such a situation, all they saw were camels they travelled on. They mounted camels and covered long journeys. Above them was the sky and beneath them was the earth. All around them [left, right, front and back] they saw mountains. The Arabs are commanded to ponder over these four natural phenomena which make Allah's might manifest.

Among animals, the camel has certain peculiar characteristics that can be a reflection of Divine wisdom and power. It is the largest, most

robust and durable animal. Although elephant is a much larger animal than the camel, Allah has mentioned the camel rather than the elephant, because the Arabs knew camels and scarcely saw an elephant. Despite the fact that a camel is such a huge animal, a Bedouin Arab will not find it difficult to look after it even if he is poor. If he is unable to gather or afford food for it, it has to be let loose and will gather its own nutriment and live on leaves. It has a long neck to reach the tops of the high trees. The food of elephants and other animals work out expensive. In Arabian deserts, water is a scarce commodity. It is not available everywhere or anytime. Yet it can survive for about a week without water as Allah's Power has provided it with a small narrow-mouthed pouch in its paunch in which it stores up extra water [which it uses up gradually for seven to eight days]. Thus it is a superb draught beast. Nature has created it uniquely, so that it is perfectly adapted to survive the hazards of the harsh climate of the desert.

There is no need to set up a ladder to climb up the high animal. Allah has divided its legs into three levels. Each leg has two knees that it manoeuvres to sit down so that it becomes easier for riders to climb up and down. It is the chief beast of burden in deserts, and as such, it is able to carry large loads. It is most difficult to travel in daytime in Arabia because of scorching sunlight. Allah has made it possible for the camel to keep on travelling the whole night. Camels are so obedient that that even a little child can lead them along anywhere. Camels are very valuable to them in many other ways that teach man that Allah is Omnipotent and has consummate wisdom.

In conclusion of the Chapter, the Messenger of Allah is comforted thus:

لَسْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِمُصَيِّرٍ (You are not a taskmaster set up over them,...88:22)
The Holy Prophet ﷺ is told that he is only a preacher, and as such he must keep on preaching. He should not worry beyond that. It is for Allah to call the unbelievers to Him to render account of their deeds and actions, and punish them accordingly.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Ghāshiyah
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Fajr

(The Dawn)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 30 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 30

وَالْفَجْرِ ﴿١﴾ وَلَيَالٍ عَشْرٍ ﴿٢﴾ وَالشَّفْعِ وَالْوَتْرِ ﴿٣﴾ وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَسْرِ ﴿٤﴾ هَلْ فِي ذَلِكَ قَسَمٌ لِّذِي حَجْرِ ﴿٥﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِعَادٍ ﴿٦﴾ إِرَمَ ذَاتِ الْعِمَادِ ﴿٧﴾ الَّتِي لَمْ يُخْلَقْ مِثْلُهَا فِي الْبِلَادِ ﴿٨﴾ وَثُمُودَ الَّذِينَ جَابُوا الصَّخْرَ بِالْوَادِ ﴿٩﴾ وَفِرْعَوْنَ ذِي الْأَوْتَادِ ﴿١٠﴾ الَّذِينَ طَغَوْا فِي الْبِلَادِ ﴿١١﴾ فَكَثُرُوا فِيهَا الْفُسَادَ ﴿١٢﴾ فَصَبَّ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّكَ سَوْطَ عَذَابٍ ﴿١٣﴾ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَبِالْمِرْصَادِ ﴿١٤﴾ فَأَمَّا الْإِنْسَانُ إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَأَكْرَمَهُ وَنَعَّمَهُ ۖ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَكْرَمَنِ ﴿١٥﴾ وَأَمَّا إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ فَقَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقَهُ ۖ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَهَانَنِ ﴿١٦﴾ كَلَّا بَلْ لَّا تَكْرُمُونَ الْيَتِيمَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَلَا تَحْضُونَ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمُسْكِينِ ﴿١٨﴾ وَتَأْكُلُونَ التُّرَاثَ أَكْلًا لَّمًّا ﴿١٩﴾ وَتُحِبُّونَ الْمَالَ حُبًّا جَمًّا ﴿٢٠﴾ كَلَّا إِذَا دُكَّتِ الْأَرْضُ دَكًّا دَكًّا ﴿٢١﴾ وَجَاءَ رَبُّكَ وَالْمَلَكُ صَفًّا صَفًّا ﴿٢٢﴾ وَجِئَاءَ يَوْمٍ يُؤْمَذُ ۖ بِهِ جَهَنَّمَ ۖ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَذَكَّرُ الْإِنْسَانُ وَأَنَّى لَهُ الذِّكْرَى ﴿٢٣﴾ يَقُولُ يَلَيَّتَنِي قَدَمْتُ لِحَيَاتِي ﴿٢٤﴾ فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَا يُعَذِّبُ

عَذَابُهُ أَحَدٌ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَلَا يُوثِقُ وَثَاقَهُ أَحَدٌ ﴿٢٦﴾ يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ
 ﴿٢٧﴾ ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً ﴿٢٨﴾ فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي
 ﴿٢٩﴾ وَادْخُلِي جَنَّتِي ﴿٣٠﴾

I swear by the dawn, [1] and by the Ten Nights, [2] and by the even and the odd, [3] and by the night when it moves away, [4] Is there (not) in that an oath (enough) for a man of sense? [5] Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with (the people) of 'Ad [6] of *Iram*, the men of tall pillars, [7] the like of whom were never created in the lands, [8] and (how He dealt) with (the people of) *Thamūd* who had carved out the rocks in the Valley (of *Qura*), [9] and with *Fir'aun* (the Pharaoh), the man of the stakes, [10] all those who had rebelled in the cities, [11] and spread a lot of mischief therein. [12] So, your Lord unloosed on them the whip of torment. [13] Surely your Lord is ever on the watch. [14] As for man, when his Lord tests him, and thus gives him honour and bounties, he says, "My Lord has honoured me." [15] But when he tests him, and thus straitens his provision for him, he says, "My Lord has disgraced me." [16] No! But you do not honour the orphan, [17] and do not encourage one another to feed the needy. [18] And you devour the inheritance with a sweeping gulp, [19] and love wealth, with an excessive love. [20] No! When the earth will be crushed thoroughly to be turned into bits, [21] and your Lord will come, and the angels as well, lined up in rows, [22] and *Jahannam* (Hell), on that day, will be brought forward, it will be the day when man will realise the truth, but from where will he take advantage of such realisation? [23] He will say, "O Would that I had sent ahead (some good deeds) for (this) my life!" [24] So, that day, no one can punish as He will punish, [25] nor can anyone shackle like He will shackle. [26]

(As for an obedient man, it will be said to him,) "O content soul, [27] come back to your Lord, well-pleased, well-pleasing. [28] So, enter among My (special) servants, [29] and enter My Paradise." [30]

Commentary

This Sūrah, by swearing five oaths in its beginning, emphasises the

following fact:

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَبِالْمُرْصَادِ

Surely your Lord is ever on the watch. [89:14]

This means that Allah is watching over whatever you do, and reward or punishment for your deeds is certain and inevitable.

The first among the five oaths sworn at the beginning is Fajr (dawn). It may refer to the dawn of every day that brings about a great change in the world, and thus directs man's attention to the absolute Omnipotence of Allah. It is also possible that it refers to the dawn of some specific day. Commentators like Sayyidnā 'Alī, Ibn 'Abbās and Ibn Zubair رضي الله عنه say that the word is general, and it refers to any dawn. According to another narration of Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, it refers to the dawn of the first of Muḥarram which is the start of the lunar-Islamic calendar. Sayyidnā Qatādah رضي الله عنه, among others, has interpreted it in the same way.

Some commentators, like Mujāhid and 'Ikramah, refer this to the dawn of 'the Day of Sacrifice' on the tenth of Dhul Ḥijjah. A narration from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه concurs with this view. The reason for this specification is that according to Islamic principles, Allah has made a night to precede the day. All days are preceded by their respective nights, except the 'the Day of Sacrifice', because the night that precedes the Day of Sacrifice is not the night of Sacrifice. In fact, the preceding night, according to Shari'ah, is the night of 'Arafah. Staying at 'Arafāt is the most important and foremost rite of Ḥajj. If a pilgrim is not able to reach 'Arafāt on the 9th of Dhul Ḥijjah, any time in the day or in the night following it to halt there for a while, he will not be considered to have performed Ḥajj at all. However if he arrives there any time during the night before the break of dawn on the 10th of Dhul Ḥijjah, his halt in 'Arafah will be acceptable and his Hajj will be considered valid. This shows that the day of 'Arafah has two nights, one preceding it, and another following it. The Day of Sacrifice [10th of Dhul Ḥijjah] has no night. From this point of view, the dawn of the day of Sacrifice, among all the days of the year, occupies a special position. [Qurtubī].

Next, it says:

لَيَالٍ عَشْرٍ (and by the Ten Nights...89:2) According Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās

ﷺ, Qatādah, Mujāhid, Suddi, Daḥḥāk, Kalbī and other leading commentators, the 'ten nights' refers to the [first] ten nights of Dhul Ḥijjah. It is recorded in Ḥadīth that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that the first ten days of Dhul Ḥijjah are the most meritorious days for Allah's worship. Every fast of the day is equivalent to fasts of the whole year. Worshipping Allah every night during this period is equivalent to worshipping Him on the night of Qadr. [Transmitted by Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah with a weak chain of authorities from Abū Hurairah ؓ - Maḥzarī]. Abū-z-Zubair narrated from Sayyidnā Jabir ؓ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said : وَالْفَجْرِ وَلَيَالٍ عَشْرٍ (I swear by the dawn and by the Ten Nights' refers to the first ten days of Dhul Ḥijjah. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ said that these are the ten nights that are mentioned in the story of Prophet Mūsā ؑ: التَّيْنِ: ... then We supplemented them with ten' [7:142]. Thus these are the ten nights in the whole year which are most meritorious. Imām Qurṭubī says that the Ḥadīth reported by Sayyidnā Jābir ؓ indicates that the ten nights of Dhul Ḥijjah are most meritorious, and that the same ten nights of Dhul Ḥijjah were designated for Prophet Mūsā ؑ.

وَالشَّفْعِ وَالْوَتْرِ (and by the even and the odd,...89:3). The Qur'ān has not specified what the words 'the even' and 'the odd' refer to. Therefore, the commentators have assigned different interpretations to them. Nevertheless, it has been mentioned in a Prophetic Ḥadīth narrated by Abū-z-Zubair from Sayyidnā Jābir ؓ thus:

(وَالْفَجْرِ. وَلَيَالٍ عَشْرٍ) هُوَ الصَّبْحُ وَعَشْرُ النَّحْرِ وَالْوَتْرُ يَوْمَ عَرَفَةَ وَالشَّفْعُ يَوْمَ النَّحْرِ

'Fajr' refers to the dawn, and 'the ten nights' refer to the first ten nights of Dhul Ḥijjah [which include the Day of Sacrifice], and that *al-watr* [the odd] refers to the day of 'Arafah [because it falls on the ninth] and *ash-shaf'* refers to the Day of Sacrifice [because it falls on the 10th day of Dhul Ḥijjah].'

Qurṭubī cites this narration and confirms that its chain of authorities is more authentic than the other tradition narrated by Sayyidnā 'Imrān Ibn Ḥusain ؓ which talks about odd [three] and even [two/four] units of prayers. Therefore, Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ 'Ikramah and Naḥḥās رَحِمَهُمَا اللّٰهُ تَعَالٰى have preferred the view that 'even' refers to the Day of Sacrifice and 'odd' refers to the day of 'Arafah.

Some commentators like Ibn Sīrīn, Masrūq, Abū Ṣāliḥ and Qatādah رَحِمَهُمَا اللّٰهُ تَعَالٰى said that 'even' refers to the entire creation, because Allah

has created them in pairs, and thus He says:

وَمِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَا زَوْجَيْنِ

'And from everything We have created (a pair of) two kinds
[51:49]'

- belief/disbelief, happiness/unhappiness, light/darkness, night/day, cold/heat, sky/earth, human/Jinn and male/female as against all of these pairs, Allah is the only One Being 'odd' that does not have a pair:

هُوَ اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الصَّمَدُ

'He, is Allah, the One, Besought of all, needing none'

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَسْرِ (and by the night when it moves away...89:4). The word *yasr* is derived from *sarā* and means 'to walk in the night' or 'travel by night'. The verse says when the night itself moves away. It signifies 'when the night departs and goes away.' After taking oath by these five items, the next verse says:

هَلْ فِي ذَلِكَ قَسَمٌ لِذِي حِجْرٍ (Is there [not] in that an oath (enough) for a man of sense?...89:5). An intelligent person is, in a very special style, invited to think and reflect. The word *hijr* literally denotes 'to prevent'. The intellect has been called *hijr* because it prevents the person from doing which is unbecoming of him – actions or statements. Are these oaths not sufficient for a man possessed of intellect, sound reasoning, understanding and religious discernment? This sentence is in the form of interrogation to awaken man from his slumber. The subject of oaths is implied, though not stated explicitly. The verse purports to say that when man considers into the Majesty of Allah and reflects on the greatness of objects of oaths, it would be confirmed and verified that everyone has to give account of his deeds, and reward and punishment in the Hereafter is sure. In this connection, reference is made to the destruction of three previous nations: [1] the nation of 'Ād; [2] the nation of Thamūd; and [3] the nation of Fir'aun (the Pharaoh). 'Ād and Thamūd are two nations whose genealogy link up with Iram. Thus Iram may refer to both, 'Ād as well as Thamūd. Here however with 'Ād only the name Iram is linked for genealogical reasons:

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِعَادٍ. إِرَامَ دَاتِ الْعِمَادِ (Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with [the people] 'Ād of Iram, the men of tall pillars...(89:6-7). The word

'Iram' in verse [7] is, grammatically speaking, either *'atf bayān* (syndetic explicative) or *badal* (complement). The purpose of the construction is to specify one of the two tribes of 'Ād. This statement specifies that it refers to *'Ad-ul-'ulā* (the early generation of 'Ād). A remnant from the former generation is referred to as *'Ād-ul-'Ukhrā*, because they are linked with their great-grand father Iram more closely than *'Ad-ul-'Ukhrā*. Here the Qur'ān refers to the first tribe as 'Ād Iram. In Surah An-Najm, they are described as: *عَادِ الْأُولَى* (the earlier 'Ād,) [53:50]

They are introduced here by the epithet: *ذَاتِ الْعِمَادِ* (the men of tall pillars)

The word *'imād* and *'amūd* means 'pillar'. The people of 'Ād are mentioned as the men of tall pillars because they were very tall in stature. They were a stronger and more powerful people than any other nations. The Qur'ān describes them explicitly, thus:

لَمْ يَخْلُقْ مِثْلَهَا فِي الْبِلَادِ (the like of whom were never created in the lands...89:8) The Qur'ān made it clear that this nation was the tallest and the strongest in their physical stature, but the Qur'ān did not state the exact measurement of the people because it was unnecessary [for Qur'ānic purposes]. Therefore, that detail has been left out. Israelite traditions, however, narrate such incredible reports about their stature, height and power that are difficult to believe. It is reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه and Muqatil that they were six yards or eighteen feet [5.46] tall. This too seems to be derived from Israelite reports. And Allah knows best!

Some commentators say that 'Iram' is the name of the 'paradise' which 'Ād's son Shaddād had built. The epithet 'possessor of tall pillars' [translated above as 'men of tall pillars'] is used for him. The [so-called paradise] was a lofty structure standing on tall pillars built with gold and silver and studded with jewels, gems and other precious stones, so that people may prefer an instant and ready at hand paradise instead of Paradise of the Hereafter. When this magnificent palace was ready for use, and Shaddād, together with the leaders of his kingdom, wanted to enter, Divine punishment overtook them. They, together with the palaces, were completely destroyed. [Qurṭubī]. In this interpretation, the verse refers to a specific punishment which descended upon the paradise built by 'Ād's son Shaddād. In the first interpretation, which the majority of

the commentators prefer, it refers to all the punishments that descended upon the nation of 'Ād.

وَفِرْعَوْنَ ذِي الْأَوْتَادِ (and with Fir'aun [the Pharaoh], the man of the stakes...89:10). The word *autad* is the plural of *watad* that means 'peg or stake or nail'. Fir'aun (the Pharaoh) is referred to as 'the man of the stakes'. There are several reasons for this. Majority of the commentators hold the view that he was so called because of the brute torture and cruel torment he inflicted on the people. When he was angry with people, he would hammer stakes into the ground and tie them to these, so that they could be tortured; or he would hammer stakes into their hands and feet, as they lay on the ground in the scorching heat of the sun, and leave them to the mercy of snakes and scorpions. Other commentators have recounted a lengthy story about his wife 'Āsiyah. She embraced 'Imān (the True Faith) and expressed it to Fir'aun (the Pharaoh). This angered him and he inflicted on her the same type of brute torture and destroyed her. [Maẓharī].

فَصَبَّ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّكَ سَوْطَ عَذَابٍ (So, your Lord unloosed on them the whip of torment....89:13). The punishment inflicted upon them as a result of their mischief is referred to here as a 'whip of torment'. It signifies that just as lashes are inflicted across different parts of the body, the torment these nations received was similar to it in that they suffered different kinds of punishment.

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَبَالْمُرْصَادِ (Surely your Lord is ever on the watch....89:14). The word *mirṣād* or *marṣad* [is derived from the root *raṣada* which means 'to lie in wait or on watch']. Thus it means 'an ambush, or a place of observation; it is usually used for a place where persons have to travel through a pass in which someone is lying in wait to strike them'. The verse purports to say that Allah is ever watching and observing their movements and activities. No one should think that he could escape Divine torment, because all are under His authority and Power, and He may administer His punishment whenever He wills. Some commentators state that this verse is the subject of the five oaths mentioned taken in the first five verses of this Sūrah.

Wealth and Poverty are no Signs of One's Acceptance or Rejection

لَا يَقُولُ رَبِّي ۚ فَأَمَّا الْإِنْسَانُ إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَأَكْرَمَهُ وَنَعَّمَهُ، فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَكْرَمَنِ ۖ وَأَمَّا إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ فَقَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقَهُ

أَهَانٍ (As for man, when his Lord tests him, and thus gives him honour and bounties, he says, "My Lord has honoured me. But when he tests him, and thus straitens his provision for him, he says, "My Lord has disgraced me...89:15-16). The word 'man' here primarily refers to an 'unbelieving man' who may form any thought about Allah as he feels like, but in its general sense, the word may include a Muslim as well who has the same thought as an unbeliever. When Allah gives abundant wealth and good health to such people, the devil puts into their head two false ideas. First, they succumb to their baser instincts; they become haughty and arrogant; and they think that the wealth and health is the result of their superior intellect, personal capability, efforts and achievement. Secondly, they think that they are enjoying a favourable status with Allah. If they did not enjoy the favourable position with Him, they would not have been granted such an abundance of wealth. By the same token, if Allah curtails their sustenance i.e. they suffer some degree of poverty, they regard it as a curse from Allah, and complain that He is humiliating or dishonouring them, while they deserved honour and respect. The unbelievers and idolaters do hold such thoughts and ideas, as the Qur'ān has pointed out on many occasions, but it is regrettable that many Muslims nowadays fall into similar ideas. Allah refutes man's belief by the expression كَلَّا Kallā 'No/never!' The matter is not as he claims. Wealth does not indicate acceptance of a man by Allah, nor does poverty indicate rejection. [For indeed Allah gives wealth to those whom He loves and those whom He does not love. Likewise, He withholds sustenance /wealth from those whom He loves and those whom He does not love.] Often the matter is quite the contrary. Fir'aun (the Pharaoh) claimed godhead and lordship, yet he never suffered from any headache. Some of Prophets ﷺ were sliced, by enemies, into two pieces with a saw. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said that the poor refugees will enter Paradise forty years before the wealthy *muhājirs* (Immigrants). [Imām Muslim has transmitted it from 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ؓ - Maḏharī]. In another narration, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said that whomever Allah loves, He keeps him away from the worldly luxuries as people keep away their sickly patients from water. [Aḥmad and Tirmidhī transmitted it on the authority of Qatādah Ibn Nu'mān__ Maḏharī].

Spending on the Orphan is not Sufficient. Their respect is also necessary

لَا تَكْرُمُونَ الْيَتِيمَ (No! But you do not honour the orphan....89:17). The

unbelievers are warned, in these verses, against some of their evil character traits. First, as is mentioned in this verse, they do not honour and treat the orphans kindly. The basic objective of the verse is that they deprive them of their rights, and do not spend on them what is due to them, but the expression used is that they do not honour them, probably to indicate that the requirement of Allah's gratitude, and also of humanitarian sense, is not only that the orphans are given their dues by spending wealth on them, but it is also necessary to honour them and treat them kindly. The guardians should not despise and look down upon their wards, and to discriminate them against their own children. This is apparently a rebuff to the unbelievers who think that wealth is an 'honour' and poverty is a 'dishonour'. After refuting their thoughts and ideas with the expression *Kallā* 'No/ never!', the verse under comment progresses to say *bal* 'But' that they are deprived of sustenance, because they squander it in immoral pursuits, depriving the orphans of their rights in it.

وَلَا تَحْضُوهَا عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمُسْكِينِ (and do not encourage one another to feed the needy...89:18). This is the second evil trait of the unbelievers. The style of this verse, in condemning the evil trait of the unbelievers, indicates that it is an obligation of the affluent to spend on the poor and indigent from their own wealth. Obviously, the poor are unable to spend owing to lack of means, but they should at least encourage others to feed the needy.

وَتَأْكُلُونَ التُّرَاثَ أَكْلًا لَمًّا (And you devour the inheritance with a sweeping gulp...89:19). The word *lamm* means to 'gather, amass, concentrate the thing'. This is the third evil trait of the unbelievers, and the verse signifies that they devour inheritance with voracious appetites however they can get it, whether by lawful means or unlawful means. They gather them all together to make a sweeping gulp. When someone passes away, they take their own shares, together with the shares of others, regardless of whether the shares belong to orphans, widows or people who are absent. [As a matter of principle,] it is not permitted to mix up lawful and forbidden wealth in any transaction. Here, however, 'inheritance' has been particularly mentioned, probably because having a greedy eye on it and pursuing it are a proof of man's greed and voracity for wealth. He stares at it like a beast of prey waiting for the person to die, and looking for the opportunity to distribute the estate. But an honourable man of

principle and a noble person would not look at the wealth of the deceased with greedy eyes.

وَتُحِبُّونَ الْمَالَ حُبًّا جَمًّا (and love wealth, with an excessive love....89:20). The word *jamm* means 'excessive'. This verse refers to the fourth evil trait of the unbelievers. They have an insatiable love for wealth. The word 'excessive' indicates that love of wealth in itself, in a sober sense, is a natural instinct of man. That has not been condemned here. What is denounced is the excessive or insatiable love of wealth. After describing the evil traits of the unbelievers, the passage reverts to the main theme that was emphasised in the earlier part of the Sūrah with five oaths, that is, the punishment of the Hereafter. In this connection, it first mentions the process of the end of the world, and subsequently the establishment of the Day of Resurrection, thus:

كَلَّا إِذَا دُكَّتِ الْأَرْضُ دَكًّا دَكًّا (No! When the earth will be crushed thoroughly to be turned into bits...89:21). The word *dakk* literally means 'to pound or crush a thing into bits and pieces'. This refers to the earthquakes that will crush and ground the mountains to dust. The world will thus be dissolved. This will be the first stage of Resurrection. When this stage of Resurrection ends, the second stage of Resurrection will begin. The word *dakkan* is repeated in order to show that there will be a series of earthquakes before the dissolution of the world.

وَجَاءَ رَبُّكَ وَالْمَلَكُ صَفًّا صَفًّا (and your Lord will come, and the angels as well, lined up in rows....89:22) They will arrive in the Plain of Gathering. The words 'your Lord will come' is an allegorical expression. No one, besides Allah, knows the nature of His coming. The words 'and the angels [will arrive] as well, lined up in rows' are clear in meaning.

وَجِئَ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِجَهَنَّمَ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَذَكَّرُ الْإِنْسَانُ وَأَنَّى لَهُ الذِّكْرَى (and *Jahannam* [Hell], on that day, will be brought forward, it will be the day when man will realise the truth, but from where will he take advantage of such realisation?.... 89:23). No one, besides Allah, knows how exactly 'Hell' will be brought forward in the Plain of Gathering. Apparently, 'Hell' which is at the moment beneath the seventh earth will at that moment will flare up, and the oceans become part of the flame. In this way, Hell during the gathering will be in front of all.

يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَذَكَّرُ الْإِنْسَانُ وَأَنَّى لَهُ الذِّكْرَى (it will be the day when man will realise the

truth, but from where will he take advantage of such realisation? - 89-23). The word *tadhakkur* in this context means 'to realise'. The unbelievers will realise the errors of their ways in the Hereafter, but it will be too late, because it is this present world where 'Imān and good deeds benefit the people. The Hereafter is the place only for reckoning and retribution. Man will express his remorse thus:

يَقُولُ يَلَيْتَنِي قَدَّمْتُ لِحَيَاتِي (He will say, "O Would that I had sent ahead [some good deeds] for [this] my life!"....89:24). When he faces the torment of disbelief and idolatry on that day of devastation, man will lament that he should have carried out good deeds and refrained from sin in this world to be saved from punishment in the Hereafter. But it will be of no avail. Allah says: 'So, that day, no one can punish like He will punish, nor can anyone shackle like He will shackle....89:26] Having described the torment of the unbelievers, the conclusion of the Sūrah gives cheerful news to the believers that they will be admitted into Paradise. Thus it says:

يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ("O contented soul...89:27). Here the soul of the believer is referred to as *nafs muṭma'innah* 'the contented soul'. The word *muṭma'innah* literally means 'calm'. It refers to the soul that is 'peaceful and tranquil' as a result of remembrance and obedience of Allah. When he abandons it, he feels restless. This is probably the same soul as is made pure, through spiritual exercises and discipline, from the evil traits and bad conduct. Obedience of Allah and His remembrance becomes his predisposition. Sharī'ah becomes his nature.

إِرْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ (come back to your Lord....89:28). The words 'come back' indicate that his first place was with his Lord, and now he is commanded to go back to Him. This confirms the narration that the souls of the believers, together with their Book of Deeds, will be in *'illiyīn*. *'Illiyīn* is a place on the seventh heaven in the shade of the Throne of the Most-Merciful Lord. This is the original resting-place of all human souls, from where they are brought out and put into human body. After death, the souls are returned to that place.

رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً (...well-pleased, well-pleasing....89:28). [The true believer's] soul is well-pleased with decrees destined by Allah and His legislative commands, and Allah too is well-pleased with His slave. The slave's being pleased with Allah's decrees and injunctions is a sign that Allah is pleased

with him. Had Allah not been pleased with him, he would not have had the ability to be pleased with Allah's decree. The true believer's soul is pleased even on his death at the moment of death. Sayyidnā 'Uḡādah Ibn Ṣāmit ؓ narrated from the Holy Prophet ﷺ, as follows:

مَنْ أَحَبَّ لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ أَحَبَّ اللَّهُ لِقَاءَهُ، وَمَنْ كَرِهَ لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ كَرِهَ اللَّهُ لِقَاءَهُ.

"He who loves to meet Allah, Allah loves to meet him; and he who dislikes to meet Allah, Allah dislikes to meet him."

When Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها heard this, she asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ: "We will be able to meet Allah only after death, but we do not like death." The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied: "That is not the case. The truth of the matter is that when death approaches a believer, the angels give him the cheerful news of Paradise and Allah's pleasure. This news makes death dearer to him. Likewise, when death approaches an unbeliever, the torment and punishment is presented to him. This situation makes the death a hateful and reprehensible thing to him." [Transmitted by Bukhārī and Muslim - Maḡharī]. In short, the love and hatred for death of the present time is not counted. What counts is [the love of] death, or [the love of] meeting Allah at the time of the extraction of soul [from the physical body] and [the love of] Allah's pleasure. This is the significance of the phrase: "Well-pleased, well-pleasing"

فَادْخُلِيْ فِيْ عِبَادِيْ (So, enter among My [special] servants...89:29). In other words, the contented soul will be addressed [compassionately], and first asked to enter the fold of righteous and sincere slaves, and then to enter Paradise. This indicates that entry into Paradise depends on their being, first and foremost, in the fold of the righteous believers. Then they will enter Paradise all together. This shows that joining the company of the righteous in this world is a sign that he will enter Paradise with them. Thus Prophet Sulaimān ؑ prayed:

وَادْخُلْنِيْ بِرَحْمَتِكَ فِيْ عِبَادِكَ الصَّالِحِيْنَ

'...and admit me, by Your mercy, among Your righteous slaves...[27:19]'

Prophet Yūsuf ؑ prayed:

وَالْحَقِّنِيْ بِالصَّالِحِيْنَ

'...and make me join the righteous. [12:101]'

The above supplications indicate that the company of the righteous is such a great blessing that even the Holy Prophets ﷺ cannot do without, as a result they pray for it.

وَادْخُلِيْ جَنَّتِيْ (and enter My Paradise.....89:30). In this verse, Paradise is attributed to Allah, and Allah said 'My Paradise'. This is a great honour, and indicates that Paradise will not only have all sorts of eternal comfort, but above all it is a place of Allah's pleasure.

The preceding verses describe the reward of the believers in such a manner that on behalf of Allah, the angels will address their souls honourably and in a befitting manner, as in the verses. It is not clear when they will be addressed. Some commentators say that they will be addressed on the Day of Reckoning after the reckoning is over. The context of the verses confirms this. The punishment of the unbelievers was described above. That will take place in the Hereafter after the Judgement has been passed. It is obvious that the believers will be addressed at the same time. Other scholars indicate that the believers will be addressed in this world at the time of death. Many authentic traditions bear testimony to the veracity of this view. Ibn Kathīr, on the other hand, reconciles the apparently conflicting statements thus: Allah will address the soul of the believers twice with these words. Once at the time of death, and again on the Day of Judgement.

Sayyidnā 'Ubādah Ibn Ṣāmit's ﷺ narration cited earlier supports the view that the address will be at the time of death. In a lengthy narration of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ, recorded in Musnad of Aḥmad, Nasā'ī and Ibn Mājah, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "When death approaches a believer, the angels of mercy bring to him a piece of white silk and say: اخرجى راضية 'Come out [from this body], well-pleased and well-pleasing, to Divine mercy and to the eternal comforts of Paradise' [to the end of narration.]" Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ says that one day he recited the verse يَٰأَيَّتِهَآ النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ (O contented soul) in the presence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, Abū Bakr ﷺ who was present in the assembly, said: "O Allah's Messenger, what a fine address and honour!" The Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Behold, the angel will address you thus after your death."

A Few Strange Incidents

Sa'īd Ibn Jubair ﷺ reports that Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ passed

away in Ṭā'if. After the funeral was prepared, a strange bird, the like of which was never seen before, came and entered the body, but no one saw it coming out of it. When it was lowered into the grave for burial, an invisible voice was heard reciting from the side of the grave: يَأْتِيهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ Everyone looked around, but could not find anyone. Another incident is recorded by Ḥāfiẓ Ṭabarānī in his book Kitāb-ul-'Ajā'ib. He narrates with his chain of authorities, an incident about Fattān Ibn Razīn Abī Hāshim that once they were imprisoned in a Roman city. They were presented before their king. The king was an infidel. He coerced them to adopt his religion, and threatened them that if anyone refuses to comply with his command, he would be beheaded. They were a few people. Three of them feared for their lives, adopted his religion and thus became apostates. The fourth person refused to adopt the king's religion. He was beheaded and his head was thrown into a nearby river. When it was thrown, the head went to the bottom of the river. Later, it emerged from the water and came to the surface. Then it looked at the other three persons, and calling each one of them by name, recited:

يَأْتِيهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ﴿٢٧﴾ ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً ﴿٢٨﴾ فَادْخُلِي فِي عِلْدِي ﴿٢٩﴾ وَادْخُلِي جَنَّتِي ﴿٣٠﴾

"O contented soul, [27] come back to your Lord, well-pleased, well-pleasing. [28] So, enter among My (special) servants, [29] and enter My Paradise." [30]

After that it dived back into the water.

This was an unusual incident which everyone witnessed and heard. When the Christians of that place witnessed this, almost all of them embraced Islam which shook up the king's throne. The three persons who had become apostates reverted to Islam. Caliph Abū Ja'far Manṣūr had them all released from their [enemy's] prison.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Fajr
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Balad

(The City)

This Sūrah is Makki, and it has 20 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 20

لَا أُقْسِمُ بِهَذَا الْبَلَدِ ﴿١﴾ وَأَنْتَ حِلٌّ بِهَذَا الْبَلَدِ ﴿٢﴾ وَوَالِدٍ وَمَا وَلَدَ ﴿٣﴾
لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي كَبَدٍ ﴿٤﴾ أَيْحَسِبُ أَنْ لَنْ يَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ أَحَدٌ ﴿٥﴾
يَقُولُ أَهْلَكْتُ مَا لَا لُبَدًا ﴿٦﴾ أَيْحَسِبُ أَنْ لَمْ يَرَهُ أَحَدٌ ﴿٧﴾ أَلَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُ عَيْنَيْنِ ﴿٨﴾ وَلِسَانًا وَشَفَتَيْنِ ﴿٩﴾ وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ ﴿١٠﴾
فَلَا اقْتَحَمَ الْعَقَبَةَ ﴿١١﴾ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْعَقَبَةُ ﴿١٢﴾ فَكُّ رَقَبَةٍ ﴿١٣﴾
أَوْ إِطْعَمٌ فِي يَوْمٍ ذِي مَسْغَبَةٍ ﴿١٤﴾ يَتِيمًا ذَا مَقْرَبَةٍ ﴿١٥﴾ أَوْ مَسْكِينًا ذَا مَتْرَبَةٍ ﴿١٦﴾ ثُمَّ كَانَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ
وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْمَرْحَمَةِ ﴿١٧﴾ أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ ﴿١٨﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
بِآيَاتِنَا هُمْ أَصْحَابُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ ﴿١٩﴾ عَلَيْهِمْ نَارٌ مُؤَصَّدَةٌ ﴿٢٠﴾

I swear by this city, [1] and (O Holy Prophet,) you are going to be allowed to fight in this city [2] and by the father and that which he begot, [3] Indeed We have created man (to live) in hard struggle. [4] Does he think that no one has power over him? [5] He says, "I have spent a lot of wealth." [6] Does he think that no one has seen him? [7] Did We not make for him two eyes, [8] and a tongue and two lips, [9] and showed him the two

ways? [10] Yet he did not make his way through the steep course, [11] And what may let you know what the steep course is? [12] (It is) freeing of the neck of a slave, [13] or giving food in a day of hunger [14] to an orphan near of kin, [15] or to a needy person lying in dust [16] then he did not join those who believe and advise each other to be patient and advise each other to be merciful. [17] Those are the People of the Right Hand. (i.e. their books of deeds will be given in their right hands) [18] As for those who reject Our verses, they are the People of the Left Hand. (i.e. their books of deeds will be given in their left hand.) [19] Upon them will be the Fire, enveloping them with closed exits. [20]

Commentary

لَا أَقْسِمُ بِهَذَا الْبَلَدِ (I swear by this city...90:1). The particle *lā* ('no') in the beginning of this sentence has no meaning here. Such particles in Arabic language are commonplace. However, the more appropriate view is that when a Sūrah begins with a *lā* (no) followed by an oath, it was revealed in refutation to a false assumption of the opponents. In other words, Allah is saying, 'No, what you [the unbelievers] are saying or thinking is not correct, but the truth is what We are swearing about...'. The word *al-balad* 'the City' refers to the Holy City of Makkah, as in Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭīn [95:3] where Allah swears an oath 'by this peaceful City [of Makkah] وَهَذَا الْبَلَدِ الْأَمِينِ'. The adjective attached to the 'City' is 'peaceful'. This shows the superiority and honour of Makkah over other cities. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Adiyy رحمته الله reports that when the Holy Prophet of Allah ﷺ was migrating from Makkah to Madīnah, he addressed the city of Makkah and said: "By Allah, you are dearer to Allah than the entire earth. If I was not forced out of this place, I would never have abandoned you." [Transmitted by Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah vide *Mazharī*].

وَأَنْتَ جِلٌّ بِهَذَا الْبَلَدِ (and [O Holy Prophet,] you are going to be allowed to fight in this city....90:2). The word *hillun* bears two possibilities: [1] It could be derived from *hulūl* which signifies to reside in or to descend on some place. In this sense, *hillun* signifies 'a dweller or resident' and the verse purports to say that the city of Makkah itself is sacred, and since Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ is the inhabitant of this city, it adds to the sanctity, honour and glory of the place. Thus, on account of the Holy Prophet's residing in that city its honour and sanctity has been enhanced and augmented. The second possibility is that it is derived from *hillatun*

which means 'the thing the doing of which is lawful'. From this point of view, *hillun* could signify one of two things: One that the pagans of Makkah consider it lawful to do the Holy Prophet ﷺ any harm, even to kill him, in this City of Makkah which is so sacred that the doing of harm to a living creature in its precincts, not to say of killing it or hunting it, is strictly forbidden even according to their own belief system . Secondly, this may be a prophecy that the city of Makkah is going to be made lawful for the Holy Prophet ﷺ in the sense that fighting in it will be allowed for him for a specified time, and He will alight in this City of Makkah, as it happened on the occasion of the Conquest of Makkah. On this occasion, all the injunctions and ordinances of the *haram* were suspended for one day, and it was made lawful to kill the disbelievers. Mazharī cites three possible meanings, and says that all three of them are equally possible.

وَوَالِدٍ وَمَا وَلَدَ (and by the father and that which he begot,...90:3) The word *walid* refers to Holy Prophet 'Ādam عليه السلام, the father of mankind, and the phrase مَا وَلَدَ 'that which he begot' refers to his children from the inception of the world to the end of the world. Thus this phrase swears an oath by Holy Prophet 'Ādam عليه السلام and all his children. The subject of the oath follows next, thus:

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي كَبَدٍ (Indeed We have created man [to live] in hard struggle...90:4) The word *kabad* means 'labour, 'toil' or 'difficulty'. The verse purports to say that man's life is a series of hard and toilsome works. Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه says: 'Man was conceived and held in his mother's womb. The mother bore the pangs of birth. The hardship of sucking the mother's milk and the difficulty of weaning. This is followed by seeking livelihood and other necessities of life with hardship. Then he endures hardships and long-suffering of old age, death, grave, resurrection, accountability of deeds before Allah, reward and punishment.' These difficulties and hardships are not confined to man. Other animals too share them. Man has particularly been mentioned in this connection because of his intelligence. The more the power of a creature's intelligence, the higher the degree of his legal obligation. Lastly, the greatest difficulty and hardship would be borne at resurrection and life-after-death, when we will be required to give an account of the deeds we might have done throughout our life. Other species of animals will not be required to do this.

Some scholars say that no creation suffers as much difficulties or hardships as human beings, despite the fact that his body is smaller and weaker than most other animals. Man's brainpower, however, is most powerful. Therefore, he has been specifically mentioned. Swearing an oath by Makkah, 'Ādam عليه السلام and his children, Allah has made it plain that man has been created in difficulties and to endure hardships. This is a proof that man did not come into existence on his own but his Creator is an All-Powerful Being who has, in His wisdom, created every species of creation with specific predisposition and capacity of actions. If man had any part in his own creation, he would never have allowed such difficulties and hardships for himself. [Qurṭubī]

Absolute Comfort, without Hardship, Is not Possible in the World: Man Must be Prepared to Endure Hardships

The oath and its subject makes plain to man that his desire to live peacefully and comfortably in this world, without enduring any hardship, is a silly idea and false notion, which is not possible to happen. Therefore, it is necessary for difficulty, hardship, distress and affliction to befall every person. Since they are bound to befall, a wise person should be in readiness to work hard for something that may help him for an eternal life. The only factor that will help him for this is faith and obedience to the Truth.

Then, after describing a few of the ignorant disbeliever's qualities, the following verse says about an unbeliever: *أَيَحْسَبُ أَنْ لَمْ يَرَهُ أَحَدٌ* (Does he think that no one has seen him?...90:7) that is, his evil deeds. He should realise that his Creator watches every action of his.

لَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُ عَيْنَيْنِ ﴿٨﴾ وَلِسَانًا وَشَفَتَيْنِ ﴿٩﴾ وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ ﴿١٠﴾

(Did We not make for him two eyes, and a tongue and two lips, and showed him the two ways?...90:8-10)

The word *najdain* is the dual form of *najd* which means an elevated or conspicuous road. The word *najdain* signifies the two high and conspicuous ways of good and evil, or of success and destruction. The preceding verse pointed out the ignorance and heedlessness of man. He thinks that Allah has no power over him, and that there is no one watching over his actions. The current verse mentions a few of the organs and abilities that Allah has endowed him with. If he reflects carefully on these endowments, he will appreciate His infinite wisdom and power within himself. He has a pair of eyes. The optic nerves and tissues are

rather delicate. They send nervous impulses to the brain when stimulated by light rays from external objects. The structure of the eye itself is most delicate. Each eye consists of a hollow, spherical capsule [eyeball], made up of several layers and structures. It is set into a socket in the skull, and is protected by eyelids and eyelashes, and eyebrows. It works like an automatic machine. When a harmful object is seen coming from the front, the eyelids close on their own. The eyelashes block the dust from getting into the eyes. The eyebrows help keep things away from falling into the eyes directly from top. The facial bones, especially the orbit [eye socket and the cheek bones], protect the eye, if one were to fall on one's face or something were to fall on the face.

The second gift that man is endowed with is the 'tongue'. This organ - the articulator - is the most amazing and important creation. It is the long piece of flesh fixed to the bottom of the mouth that can represent thoughts of the heart, the automatic and mysterious machine. The heart works in an amazing way. A thought occurs in the heart, the brain interprets it, and prepares appropriate topic and words. The words are uttered by the tongue. Such a complex task is performed so swiftly that the listener does not even realise how many systems have worked before the distinguishable sounds, letters and words were uttered. Nature has equipped man with two lips that play an important role in articulating the different sounds, letters and words. Nature has made the tongue such a swift-working articulator that within half a minute it may utter a word which may take him out from Hell and admit him into Paradise, as the word of faith, or may endear him to his enemy in the world, as by seeking forgiveness of his shortcomings. The same tongue within the same short span of time may take him to Hell, as by uttering the word of disbelief, or may make him his biggest enemy who was previously his closest friend, as by using obscene language against him. The tongue has many benefits as well as many ways of destruction. It is a double-edged sword that can operate against an enemy, and it can also cut one's own throat. Therefore, Allah has kept it covered within the case of two lips. Probably, this is the reason why the pair of lips is mentioned. The Creator Who has endowed man with tongue has equipped him with a pair of lips in order to protect it. Therefore, he should be careful in its use. He should not unsheathe it unnecessarily. Allah has equipped him with a pair of eyes, a pair of lips and a tongue, and has equipped him with the ability to distinguish good from evil and right from wrong, thus:

فَالْهَمَّهَا فَجُورُهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا

then inspired it with its [instinct of] evil and piety [91:8]

Thus in the first instance man receives guidance from his own conscience. This is supported by the guidance of the Holy Prophets عليهم السلام and celestial books that clarify it.

In sum, an ignoramus and heedless person, who denies the power of the Omnipotent, should look into his own being, he would be able to observe His attribute of perfect power and consummate wisdom. He should observe with his two eyes and confess with his tongue. He has been shown the two ways of good and evil; and of right and wrong so that he may choose between the two. Obviously, he should choose the good way. In his make-up, there exists the ability to take either way. All these bounties have not motivated man to attempt the steep course. Then the heedless man is warned that he should reflect on the clear proofs and arguments pertaining to Allah's Omnipotence, pertaining to the Day of Judgement, life after death and Reckoning, and believe in these articles of faith. This faith requires that man should be a source of benefit and comfort to others; he should abstain from hurting them; he should believe in Allah; he should amend his own conduct and think of reforming others also, so that, on the Day of Judgement, he may be among the people of the right hand, the inmates of Paradise, enjoying a happy recompense for what he has done in this life. The unfortunate ones who persistently denied the Truth shall be encircled by the Hell-fire. This theme has been taken up from this point onward to the end of the Sūrah. Failing to do a few of the good deeds have been [selectively] described in a unique style.

فَلَا اقْتَحَمَ الْعَقَبَةَ ﴿١١﴾ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْعَقَبَةُ ﴿١٢﴾

(Yet he did not make his way through the steep course. And what may let you know what the steep course is? ...90:11-12]

The word '*aqabah*' means 'hill, high place or a steep road'. It also refers to a 'low area of land between two hills or mountains, that is, a valley'. '*Aqabah*' helps a man in saving himself when pursued by an enemy by ascending the summit of the mountain, or in escaping by descending into the valley. Here the word '*aqabah*' refers to obedience and devotion. Just as it saves man from an enemy, righteous deeds save man from the punishment of the Hereafter. The righteous deeds are as follows:

فَكَرَّبَهُ رَبِّهِ ﴿١٣﴾ ([It is] freeing of the neck of a slave...90:13). This is a great

devotional act [and carries a great reward because] it moulds a man's life.

أَوْ إِطْعَمٌ فِي يَوْمٍ ذِي مَسْغَبَةٍ (or giving food in a day of hunger...90:14).

Although it is an act of great reward to feed any hungry person, it carries even a greater reward to feed certain people, as follows:

يَتِيمًا ذَا مَقْرَبَةٍ ﴿٥﴾ أَوْ مِسْكِينًا ذَا مَتْرَبَةٍ ﴿٦﴾

(to an orphan near of kin, or to a needy person lying in dust....90:15-16)

If an orphaned family member is given food to eat, its reward is two fold, for satisfying the hunger of a hungry person and for maintaining family ties and fulfilling his rights.

فِي يَوْمٍ ذِي مَسْغَبَةٍ (in a day of hunger...90:14). It means that feeding him in a day when he is hungry will attract more reward. If an orphan is not a close relative or family member, but he is so poor as to be wallowing in dust, spending on him will yield a greater reward. The poorer the person is, the greater will be the reward for the spender.

Obligations of a Believer

ثُمَّ كَانَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْمَرْحَمَةِ (then he did not join those who believe and advise each other to be patient and advise each other to be merciful...90:17). The verse points out that the doing only of good actions mentioned in the foregoing verse is not enough for raising the all round stature of the Muslim community. Good ideals and right principles, combined with continuous and sustained adherence to the path of moral rectitude and teaching of virtues to others, are equally essential for the attainment of the high aim. Thus the verse after 'faith' draws the attention of a believer to his socio-moral obligation to the effect that he ought to teach his other Muslim brothers to be patient and to be merciful. The word *ṣabr* signifies 'to withhold oneself from evil deeds and to act upon good deeds'. The word *marḥamah* signifies 'to show mercy to one another or to empathise with others and abstain from hurting them.' This embraces almost all the injunctions of the entire religion.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Balad
Ends here

Sūrah Ash-Shams

(The Sun)

This Sūrah is Makki, and it has 15 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 15

وَالشَّمْسِ وَضُحَاهَا ﴿١﴾ وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا تَلَّهَا ﴿٢﴾ وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا جَلَّهَا ﴿٣﴾
وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَاهَا ﴿٤﴾ وَالسَّمَاءِ وَمَا بَنَاهَا ﴿٥﴾ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا طَحَاهَا ﴿٦﴾
وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا ﴿٧﴾ فَالْهَمَّهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا ﴿٨﴾ قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ
زَكَّاهَا ﴿٩﴾ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا ﴿١٠﴾ كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ بِطَغْوَاهَا ﴿١١﴾ إِذِ
أَنْبَعَثَ أَشْقَاهَا ﴿١٢﴾ فَقَالَ لَهُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ نَاقَةَ اللَّهِ وَسُقْيَاهَا ﴿١٣﴾
فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَعَقَرُوهَا ۖ فَدَمْدَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِذَنْبِهِمْ فَسَوَّاهَا ﴿١٤﴾ وَلَا يَخَافُ
عَقْبَاهَا ﴿١٥﴾

I swear by the sun and his broad light, [1] and by the moon when she follows him, [2] and by the day when it shows its brightness, [3] and by the night when it envelops him, [4] and by the sky, and the One who built it, [5] and by the earth, and the One who spread it, [6] and by the soul, and the One who made it well, [7] then inspired it with its (instincts of) evil and piety, [8] success is really attained by him who purifies it, [9] and failure is really suffered by him who pollutes it. [10] (The People of) Thamud denied the truth because of their transgression, [11] when rose up the one who was most wretched of them. [12] So, the Messenger of Allah said to them, "Be careful of Allah's she-camel and her right to drink."

[13] But they rejected him and killed her, so their Lord sent eradicating torment upon them, and made it equal for all. [14] And He has no fear of its consequence. [15]

Commentary

Allah swears by the objects and phenomena mentioned in verses [1-7], which gives these creations an added significance and draws man's attention to them. Man ought to reflect on these phenomena and try to appreciate their value and the purpose of their creation. The first oath is taken by:

وَالشَّمْسِ وَضُحَاهَا (I swear by the sun and his broad light,...91:1). The phrase 'and his broad light' is, though conjoined to 'by the sun' by means of the conjunctive particle 'and', the context indicates that 'broad light' is in adjectival position qualifying *shams* 'the sun', that is to say, 'I swear by the sun when it is in the time of forenoon. The word *duha* is that part of the day when the sun rises [early in the morning] and goes up slightly higher [on the sky], and its light spreads on the earth. Man observes it to be near to himself and observes it fully on account of lack of heat.

The second oath is taken by:

وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا تَلَّهَا (and by the moon when she follows him,...91:2). This signifies one of two things: [1] The moon following the sun is seen clearly during the middle of the lunar months when the full moon rises to dominate the sky with its radiance after sunset. [2] The phrase 'when she follows him' could signify just as the sun is seen in full in broad light, so does the moon, following the sun, becomes full. The third oath is taken by:

وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا تَجَلَّىهَا (and by the day when it shows its brightness...91:3). The attached pronoun *hā* 'its' may possibly refer to the earth or the world, although neither of the nouns precedes it. Such usage in Arabic is commonplace, especially if the phenomenon, such as the earth or the world, with which man is generally familiar. In such a case Arabs commonly refer to the phenomenon simply by using a pronoun without making prior reference to it. The addressee understands the meaning by implication. The Qur'ān has many examples of, and bears ample testimony to, this grammatical phenomenon. The verse thus signifies 'by the day and by the world or the earth which the day has brightened up'. In other words, 'by the day when it is fully bright'. Another possibility, which is more pertinent to the context, is that the pronoun 'its' refers to the 'sun' in which case it signifies 'by the day when it brightens up the

sun'. This relation of attribution, in this case, would be a metaphorical relationship. Although the sun is usually understood to be the cause of the day to come out, here the day is said to brighten up the sun. Thus the verse would signify 'when the sun is seen brightened up because the day is out'.

The fourth oath is taken thus:

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَاهَا (and by the night when it envelops him,...91:4). In other words, when it [the night] sets in, the brightness of the sun is concealed [and only darkness prevails].

The fifth oath is:

وَالسَّمَاءِ وَمَا بَنَاهَا (and by the sky, and the One who built it...91:5). Most clearly the context suggests that the *mā* may be taken as infinitival particle [*masdariyyah*], signifying 'by the sky and its make' as elsewhere in the Qur'an غَفَرَلِي رَبِّي ...how my Lord has forgiven me [36:27]⁽¹⁾

The sixth oath is:

وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا طَحَاهَا (and by the earth, and the One who spread it...91:6). The *mā* in this phrase too stands for *maṣdariyyah* or infinitival particle, signifying 'by the earth and its expanse'. The word *ṭahwun* means 'to spread'. Thus in the two verses above attention has been focused on the great Designer and Architect of the sky and earth [that is, the universe], and on the perfection and complete freedom from flaw or defect in the design and creation of the universe. Sayyidnā Qatādah رحمته الله and others reported this interpretation. Kashshāf, Baiḍāwī and Qurṭubī preferred this interpretation. Some of the commentators have taken *mā* in the sense of man 'the One Who' and refer it to 'Allah', signifying 'by the sky and its Maker and by the earth and One who spreads it. Thus far, all the oaths were taken by the created objects and phenomena. In between is taken oath by Allah. And Allah knows best! The seventh oath is taken thus:

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا (and by the soul, and the One who made it well,...91:7) If, in this phrase, the particle *mā* is taken to function as infinitival particle, it signifies 'by the human soul and its perfection'. If *mā* is taken in the sense of *man* (مَنْ), it signifies 'by the soul and the One who proportioned it'. The

1. It should be kept in mind that the translation of the text is not based on this construction. It is based on taking '*mā*' as *mousulah* in the sense of 'the one' as adopted by Maulānā Thanawī, and explained by the author in the following verse.

word *taswiyah* means, to proportion, balance, perfect. The meaning of this word has been explained in the previous Sūrah.

فَاللَّهُمَّاهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا (then inspired it with its [instincts of] evil and piety...91:8) The word *ilhām* denotes 'to cast into the heart'. The word *fujūr* denotes 'open transgression'. The meaning of *taqwā* is well-known. This sentence is linked with the seventh oath 'وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا' and by the soul, and the One who made it well, [91:7]', signifying that Allah has equipped man with human soul which has the capacity to distinguish between good and bad, and right and wrong. In other words, in his make-up Allah has built in him a special ability to choose freely the righteous path or the sinful path. Whichever way he takes out of his own free will, he will be rewarded or punished. This interpretation is deducible from a traceable Ḥadīth which is transmitted by Muslim on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Imrān Ibn Ḥuṣayn رضي الله عنه. The Holy Prophet ﷺ was sitting in the company of his followers. They asked him a question regarding Divine Destination. In response, the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited this verse. This verse will allay the doubt about Divine Destination only if the words 'then inspired it with its (instincts of) evil and piety, [91:8]' are taken in the sense that human soul has been inspired with conscience to distinguish between right and wrong, and has also been granted the ability to do good as well as the ability to commit sin. Man is not a creature of pure force or coercion. He has free will to choose his path of good or evil. He, in fact, has the option to do good or refrain from sin. The choice is his, for which he is rewarded or punished.

Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah and Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه report that whenever the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited the verses [91:7-8] under comment would stop and recite the following supplication aloud:

اللَّهُمَّ اِنِّ نَفْسِي تَقْوَاهَا اَنْتَ وَلِيُّهَا وَمَوْلَاهَا وَاَنْتَ خَيْرُ مَنْ رَزَكْتَهَا

'O Allah! Give my soul its good. You are its Guardian and Master, and the best to purify it.'

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ رَزَكْتَهَا وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا (success is really attained by him who purifies it, and failure is really suffered by him who pollutes it....91:10). This is the subject of the seven oaths. The primitive meaning of *tazkiyah* is 'inner cleanliness', signifying 'he who obeyed Allah and purified his inner and outer selves.' Verse [10] signifies 'he who caused his soul to sink in the swamp of sins will be deprived'. The word *dassa* is derived from the basic word *dass* which denotes 'to bury in the ground' as for instance it

occurs elsewhere in the Qur'an, thus:

أَمْ يَدُسُّهُ فِي التُّرَابِ

'...or put it away into the dust? [16:59]

Some of the commentators have analysed that the pronouns of *zakka* 'He purified' and *dassa* 'He caused to pollute' as referring to 'Allah', signifying that 'he is successful indeed whose soul Allah has purified and he has failed whose soul Allah pollutes'. This verse has divided the entire mankind into two groups: [1] successful; and [2] unsuccessful. An example of the second group has been cited to show how it rejected the message of Allah and consequently how Allah destroyed them. Such a group will receive severe punishment in the Hereafter. Sometimes, however, an instalment of punishment is meted out to them in this world as in the case of Thamūd. Their story is recounted fully in Sūrah A'rāf [S.7:73-79; S.11:61-68; S. 26:141-159; S.27:45-53; S.41:17-18; S.54:23-32; and S. 69:4-5]. Here a brief reference is made to that story and their punishment.

فَدَمْدَمَ عَلَيْهِمُ رَبُّهُمْ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ فَسَوَّاهَا (... so their Lord sent eradicating torment upon them, and made it equal for all. And He has no fear of its consequence....91:14-15). The word *damdama* refers to such tormenting scourge as is unleashed on a person or a nation again and again, until it destroys or crushes them completely. *Fa-sawwāhā* signifies that the scourge overtook the entire nation, men, women, children, and young and old.

In conclusion, the verse says: وَلَا يَخَافُ عُقْبَاهَا 'Allah has no fear of its consequence'. It means that Divine torment that destroys a nation completely cannot be compared to the torment inflicted by the greatest king of this world, because a tyrant king who destroys his people on a large scale, fears for his life, lest the survivors or the supporters of the people destroyed should revenge on him and rebel against him. Whoever destroys others is himself in danger of avenge. Those who attack others must necessarily bear the brunt of counter-attack except Allah. When a people incur Divine punishment and are thus destroyed, Allah has no fear from any one.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Ash-Shams
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Lail

(The Night)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 21 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 21

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَى ﴿١﴾ وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا تَجَلَّى ﴿٢﴾ وَمَا خَلَقَ الذَّكَرَ
وَالْأُنثَى ﴿٣﴾ إِنَّ سَعْيَكُمْ لَشَتَّى ﴿٤﴾ فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُعْطِيَ وَاتَّقَى ﴿٥﴾
وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنَى ﴿٦﴾ فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُ لِلْيُسْرَى ﴿٧﴾ وَأَمَّا مَنْ بَخِلَ
وَأَسْتَغْنَى ﴿٨﴾ وَكَذَّبَ بِالْحُسْنَى ﴿٩﴾ فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُ لِلْعُسْرَى ﴿١٠﴾
وَمَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُ مَالُهُ إِذَا تَرَدَّى ﴿١١﴾ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا لَلْهُدَى ﴿١٢﴾ وَإِنَّ لَنَا
لَلْآخِرَةَ وَالْأُولَى ﴿١٣﴾ فَأَنْذَرْتُكُمْ نَارًا تَلَظَّى ﴿١٤﴾ لَا لَصْلِبَهَا إِلَّا
الْأَشْقَى ﴿١٥﴾ الَّذِي كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّى ﴿١٦﴾ وَسَيُجَنَّبُهَا الْأَتْقَى ﴿١٧﴾
الَّذِي يُؤْتِي مَالَهُ يَتَزَكَّى ﴿١٨﴾ وَمَا لِأَحَدٍ عِنْدَهُ مِنْ نِعْمَةٍ تُجْزَى ﴿١٩﴾
إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِ الْأَعْلَى ﴿٢٠﴾ وَلَسَوْفَ يَرْضَى ﴿٢١﴾

I swear by the night when it covers (the sun), [1] and by the day when it is unveiled, [2] and by the One who created the male and the female, [3] your efforts are diverse: [4] As for the one who gives (in charity) and fears Allah, [5] and believes in the best (religion), [6] We will facilitate for him the way to extreme ease (i.e. the comforts of Paradise). [7] But the one who is miser and deems himself self-sufficient, [8] and rejects the best

(religion), [9] for him We will facilitate the way to extreme distress. [10] And his wealth will not help him when he will fall down (into Hell). [11] Of course, it is undertaken by Us to guide, [12] and in Our control is the Hereafter and the worldly life. [13] So I have warned you of a blazing fire. [14] None will enter it but the wretched one [15] who rejected (the truth) and turned away (from it). [16] And saved from it will be the most God-fearing one, [17] who gives his wealth (in charity) to become purified, [18] while no one has conferred any favour on him for which he would give a return, [19] but (he gave his wealth in charity) only to seek the Countenance of his Lord, the Most High. [20] And surely he will soon be happy. [21]

Commentary

إِنَّ سَعْيَكُمْ لَشَتَّى (your efforts are diverse....92:4). This statement is like the statement in Sūrah Inshiqāq, verse [6]:


إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَدًّا

'O man, you have to work hard constantly to reach your Lord.
[84:6]

which has already been explained in that Sūrah. The sense is that man, by his nature, is used to making efforts for one objective or another. But the nature and the results of these efforts are different. Some people work hard for an objective that brings eternal happiness to them, and others work hard for an objective that makes them suffer eternal perdition. It is reported in a Tradition that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Each morning when a man gets up, he goes to conduct his business and keeps himself busy. His business is either successful and emancipates himself from Hell, or unsuccessful and his efforts become the cause of his destruction." Therefore, a wise person should first apply his mind to think whether his efforts will pay dividends, and he should never undertake those efforts that bring about temporary comfort and pleasure, but eternal perdition and grief.

The Two Diverse Types of Human Efforts Divide Humankind into Two Groups

The Qur'ān further shows that, broadly speaking, the humankind may be divided into two opposing groups in terms of their opposing efforts. Each of the two groups are characterised by three qualities. The

first group is a successful one, and its three characteristics are: [1] they give in charity in the cause of Allah; [2] fear Allah and avoid violating the injunctions of Allah in every aspect of life; and [3] believe in the 'best word'. The 'best words' refer to the credo of 'there is no god but Allah' [as Ibn 'Abbās, Ḍaḥḥāk  have explained]. Testifying to the *kalimah* signifies 'to profess the True Faith'. Faith or belief is the essence of all actions, and comes first in order of rank, but on this occasion, it is mentioned last, probably because the main theme in this context is that of physical exertion, efforts and actions. 'Īmān or faith, on the other hand, pertains to the heart. It signifies the acceptance and confirmation of Allah and His Messenger with one's heart. Confession of this must be made by means of reciting *kalimah shahādah* 'testimony of faith'. Obviously, none of these things involve physical exertion or effort, nor are they generally counted as actions.

The second group is [the unsuccessful one] and its three characteristics are: [1] they are misers to such an extent that they even fail to pay the *zakāh* and other obligatory alms; [2] they deem themselves self-sufficient rather than obeying Allah; and [3] they reject the 'best word' [that is, the *kalimah* of 'Īmān]. Referring to the first group, the verse says:

فَسَنِيْسِرُهُ لِيُسْرَى (We will facilitate for him the way to extreme ease [i.e. the comforts of Paradise]....92:7). The word *yusrā* literally denotes 'ease and comfort' or a thing in which there is no difficulty, but here it refers to "Paradise". Likewise, referring to the second group it says:

فَسَنِيْسِرُهُ لِّلْعُسْرَى (for him We will facilitate the way to extreme distress....92:10). The opposite of *yusrā* is 'usrā which literally denotes 'extreme distress, referring to "Hell". The two statements signify that those who exert their efforts in the first three acts, that is, spending in the cause of Allah, fearing Allah and testifying to the *kalimah*, Allah will pave their way to extreme ease, that is, to deeds that will lead them to the comforts of Paradise. On the other hand, those who exert their efforts in the latter three acts, Allah will pave their way to extreme distress, that is, make easy for them to perform deeds that will lead them to Hell. By right, here it should have been said that the deeds of Paradise or Hell are made easy for them, because 'easy' or 'difficult' qualify deeds, and not persons or people. But the Qur'ān says that the people or the people themselves

will be made easy to do the deeds. This probably implies that the first group will be predisposed to behave in a particular way that behaving otherwise will make them feel uneasy. The second group will be predisposed to behave in a way that will make them feel comfortable to do deeds of Hell, and they will feel uneasy doing deeds of Paradise. Each of these two groups will have their own nature and predisposition, and will find it easier to behave in that particular way. A Ḥadīth confirms that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

اعملوا فكل ميسر لما خلق له، أما من كان من اهل السعادة فييسر لعمل السعادة
وأما من كان من اهل الشقاوة فييسر لعمل اهل الشقاوة

"Perform deeds, for everyone will have the deeds of what he was created for [Paradise or Hell] made easy for him. Those people who are the people of happiness, they will have the deeds of the people of happiness made easy for them. And those who are the people of misery, they will have the deeds of the people of misery made easy for them."

But both these things are the results of the use of the God-given choice and free will. Therefore, man is rewarded or punished.

Thereafter the unfortunate inmates of Hell are warned, thus:

وَمَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُ مَالُهُ إِذَا تَرَدَّى (And his wealth will not help him when he will fall down...92:11). The word *taraddā* literally denotes 'to fall into a pit and perish'. The expression 'When he fall' signifies that when Divine decree regarding his destruction comes into operation, nothing - not even his wealth - will save him, whether in grave after his death, or on the Day of Judgement, when he will be falling into the abyss of Hell.

لَا يَصْلِيهَا إِلَّا الْأَشْقَى. الَّذِي كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّى (None will enter it but the wretched one who rejected [the truth] and turned away....92:16). This describes the fire of Hell. It is quite clear that only a *kāfir* will reject Allah and His Messenger. Apparently, it seems that a sinful believer who does not reject the truth will not enter Hell, whereas the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth are replete with clear texts that a sinful believer will enter Hell, unless he had repented, or someone interceded for him, or was forgiven out of pure Grace. He will abide in Hell until he has received punishment for the sins he has committed. After paying for his sins, he will be taken out of Hell, and through the blessings of his faith, he will be admitted into Paradise.

Apparently, the wordings of the verse are contrary to this interpretation. Therefore, it is necessary that the interpretation of the verse under comment be brought in line with other Qur'ānic verses and authentic Aḥādīth. Its plain and simple interpretation would be that this verse refers to entering the Hell for good, which is peculiar to the unbelievers. They will be tortured eternally in the Hell-fire. The sinful believers, on the other hand, will receive punishment for their sins and will eventually - at some time or the other - be taken out of Hell. Other scholars of Tafsīr have given some other interpretations too, which can also be appropriate. Tafsīr Maḥzarī has come up with another explanation according to which 'the wretched one' and 'the most God-fearing one' should not be taken in its general sense. Both words refer particularly to people who lived during the blessed time of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. From amongst them, no Muslim, who lived at that time, will enter Hell through the blessings of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ company, even though he might have committed some sins incidentally.

All of The Blessed Companions will be Saved from the Ordeal of Hell

The reason for this is that the Companions rarely ever committed sins. Furthermore, even if they did commit sins, they must have repented by dint of the fear of the Hereafter - as their living conditions indicate . If any of them committed a sin, his good deeds are so many that they can wipe out the sin as the Qur'an says:

إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ

'...Surely good deeds erase bad deeds__[11:114]'

Adopting the company of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is an act that can outweigh all other good deeds. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said regarding the righteous members of the community:

هم قوم لا يشقى جلسهم ولا يخاف انيسهم

'The one who sits with them is never deprived, and the one who feels happy in their company is never unsuccessful.' [Ṣaḥīḥain]

Obviously, a person who sits in the company of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and is his intimate associate cannot be wretched. Therefore, there are express texts available in the authentic Traditions that all the noble

Companions are safe from the punishment of Hell. The Qur'an itself bears testimony that -

وَكُلًّا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْحُسْنَى

'...and to each Allah has promised good [4:95]

Husnā in this statement refers to 'Paradise'. In another verse, the Qur'an says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ سَبَقَتْ لَهُمْ مِنَّا الْحُسْنَىٰ أُولَٰئِكَ عَنْهَا مُبْعَدُونَ

Surely, those for whom the good (news) from Us has come earlier shall be kept far away from it. [21:101]

Husnā in this statement also refers to 'Paradise'. The pronoun 'it' in the phrase 'from it' refers to 'Hell', signifying that they will be far away from Hell. A Tradition says that 'Hell-Fire will not touch him who has seen me'. [Tirmidhī transmitted it from Jābir رضي الله عنه].

وَسَيُجَنَّبُهَا الْأَتْقَى. الَّذِي يُؤْتِي مَالَهُ يَتَزَكَّى (And saved from it will be the most God-fearing one who gives his wealth [in charity] to become purified,...92:17-18). This verse describes the reward of the most God-fearing person, as opposed to the punishment of the most wretched in the preceding verse. The word *atqā* is the superlative form and signifies a man of *taqwā*, that is, the most God-fearing person, who spends his wealth in obedience of his Lord in order to purify himself from sins, will be kept far away from the fire of Hell.

The wordings of the verse give good news, in general, to anyone who spends in Allah's cause in a state of faith, but the occasion of revelation indicates that *atqa* refers to Sayyidnā Abū Bakr Aṣ-Ṣiddiq رضي الله عنه in particular. Ibn Abī Ḥatim reports from Sayyidnā 'Urwah رضي الله عنه that seven Muslims had been enslaved by the Makkan disbelievers. When they became Muslims, they were persecuted in a variety of ways. Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه spent a great amount of his money, and purchased them and set them free. Verses [17-21] were revealed on this occasion. [Maḏharī]

وَمَا لِأَحَدٍ عِنْدَهُ مِنْ نِعْمَةٍ تُجْزَى (while no one has conferred any favour on him for which he would give a return,...92:19) Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه did this great favour by spending abundant wealth. The emancipated slaves had not done him any favour in the past, so that one could say that he was

returning their favour. He took this step for one purpose only as the verse says:

إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِ الْأَعْلَى (but [he gave his wealth in charity] only to seek the Countenance of his Lord, the Most High...92:20). Mustadrak of Hakim records that it was a usual practice of Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه that he used to purchase Muslim slaves from the disbelievers and set them free whenever he found them in their bondage. Generally, these people were weak and helpless. Abū Qaḥāfah, the father of Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه, said to him: "Since you are emancipating slaves, why do you not set free strong and brave people, so that they may assist you in fighting the enemies and protect you." He replied: "My purpose of emancipating them is not to expect any benefit in return. My only purpose is to seek the pleasure of Allah." [Maḏharī]

وَلَسَوْفَ يَرْضَى (And surely he will soon be happy...92:21). Whoever spends in Allah's way with pure and good intentions of pleasing Allah, and not for any personal worldly gains, will acquire the pleasure of Allah in the Hereafter by achieving the wonderful and eternal blessings of Paradise. It is confirmed that these verses were revealed about Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه. Therefore, this last verse of the Sūrah is a great and splendid news and honour for him given in this very world by Allah.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Lail
Ends here

Sūrah Aḍ-Ḍuḥā (The Forenoon)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 11 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 11

۱ وَالضُّحَى ﴿١﴾ وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا سَجَى ﴿٢﴾ مَا وَدَّعَكَ رَبُّكَ وَمَا قَلَى ﴿٣﴾
وَلَلْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لَّكَ مِنَ الْأُولَى ﴿٤﴾ وَلَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضَى ﴿٥﴾
أَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيمًا فَآوَى ﴿٦﴾ وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَى ﴿٧﴾
وَوَجَدَكَ عَائِلًا فَأَغْنَى ﴿٨﴾ فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ ﴿٩﴾ وَأَمَّا السَّائِلَ
فَلَا تَنْهَرْ ﴿١٠﴾ وَأَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ ﴿١١﴾

I swear by the forenoon, [1] and by the night when it becomes peaceful, [2] your Lord (O Holy Prophet,) has neither forsaken you, nor has become displeased. [3] And the Hereafter is much better for you than the present life. [4] And of course, your Lord will give you so much that you will be pleased. [5] Did He not find you an orphan, and give you shelter? [6] And He found you unaware of the way (the Shari'ah), then He guided you. [7] and He found you in need, then made you need-free. [8] Therefore, as for orphan, do not oppress him, [9] and as for the beggar, do not scold him. [10] And about the bounty of your Lord, do talk. [11]

Commentary

Occasion of Revelation

Bukhārī, Muslim and Tirmidhī have narrated from Sayyidnā Jundub

ﷺ that once a finger of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was wounded and started bleeding, he said:

ان انت الا اصبع دميت.....وفي سبيل الله مالقت

'You are merely a finger that is bleeding; [what does it matter] if you are hurt: it all happened in Allah's cause.'

Sayyidnā Jundub ؓ narrated this incident and said that revelation of the Qur'ān to the Holy Prophet ﷺ came to a halt, and that Jibrā'il ؑ stopped coming to him for a while. The unbelievers taunted, saying: "Muḥammad's Lord has forsaken him, and is displeased with him." Sūrah Ad-Ḍuḥā was revealed on this occasion. According to the narration in Bukhari by Sayyidnā Jundub ؓ, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was unable to wake up for a few nights for *tahajjud* prayer owing to illness. In this narration, there is no mention of 'delay in revelation'. In Timidhī's narration, there is mention about the 'delay in revelation' but no mention about his inability to wake up for *tahajjud* prayer. These reports are not conflicting. The narrator might have narrated one incident at one time, and reported another incident at another time. The lady who taunted the Holy Prophet ﷺ was Umm Jamīl, the wife of Abū Lahab, as other reports indicate. 'Delay in revelation' took place twice. Once in the very early stage of the call. This is known as *fatrah al-wahy* 'temporary break in the revelation'. This was the longest period. Another narration states that when the pagans or the Jews asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ about the soul, he promised them that he would give them a reply the next day. However, he forgot to add *insha 'Allah* (if Allah wills). As a result, revelation ceased for a few days. The pagans began to taunt the Holy Messenger ﷺ, saying that Allah had abandoned him, and is displeased with him. It was on this occasion that the Sūrah was revealed.

وَلَاخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لَّكَ مِنَ الْأُولَى (And the Hereafter is much better for you than the present life....93:4). The word '*akhirah*' may be taken in its popular sense of the 'Hereafter' and its opposite '*ulā*' may be taken in the sense of the present 'world'. With these words, Allah tells the Holy Prophet ﷺ not to be disturbed by the taunts of the pagans, because they will see in this world that their assumptions and accusations were absolutely false. In the Hereafter, he will be blessed with Divine favours to his heart's content -

much more than what he will receive in this fleeting world. The word 'ākhirah may also be taken in its primitive sense i.e. 'the later state or condition' as opposed to 'ūlā 'the former state or condition'. The verse, in this case, would mean that every succeeding moment of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ life is better than the preceding one. It includes progress in knowledge and wisdom, as well as in degrees of his nearness to Allah, and it also includes progress in economic and political fields.

وَلَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضَى (And of course, your Lord will give you so much that you will be pleased....93:5). Allah does not specify here what he will give him. The statement is open and general. The Holy Prophet ﷺ will be granted everything he desires so much that he will be pleased. Among his desired thing is the progress of Islam; the general spread of Islam in the world; fulfilment of every need of the Ummah; triumph of the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself over his enemies and raising the word of Allah in the land of the enemy. When this verse was revealed, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

إِذَا لَا أَرْضِي وَوَاحِدٌ مِّنْ أُمَّتِي فِي النَّارِ

'If that is the case, then I will not be pleased as long as one [single member] of my Ummah [remains] in Fire.' [Qurtubī].

In a narration by Sayyidnā 'Alī رضي الله عنه, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Allah will accept my intercession for my Ummah [community]. Allah will ask: رَضِيتَ يَا مُحَمَّد 'O Muḥammad, are you pleased?'" He will reply: يَا رَبِّ رَضِيتُ "My Lord, I am pleased." Muslim records from Sayyidnā 'Amr Ibn-ul-'Āṣ to the effect that the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited a verse concerning the Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام:

فَمَنْ تَبِعَنِي فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي وَمَنْ عَصَانِي فَإِنَّكَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

'...So, one who follows me is surely mine, and the one who disobeys me, then You are Most Forgiving, Very Merciful. [14:36]'

Then he recited a verse which contains the words of Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام

إِنْ تُعَذِّبْهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ عِبَادُكَ

'If You punish them, then, they are Your slaves [5:118]'

Then he raised his hands, he wept and prayed:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اُمَّتِيْ اُمَّتِيْ

'O Allah, my *ummah*, my *ummah*!'

Allah sent Jibra'il عليه السلام to inquire as to why he was weeping [while Allah knows the reason]. Jibra'il Amīn عليه السلام came and inquired why he was weeping. The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied: "I seek my *ummah*'s forgiveness." Allah sent Jibra'il عليه السلام back to inform him that He has pardoned them, and that Allah would please him and would not displease him regarding his *ummah*.

In response to the unbelievers' taunts, it was briefly mentioned that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has already been blessed with many Divine favours. The Sūrah elaborates on three of them in particular.

Favour [1]

اَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيْمًا فَآوَى (Did He not find you an orphan, and give you shelter?...93:6). The Holy Prophet ﷺ was an orphan. His father died before he was born, leaving no wealth or property to look after him. The words 'and gave you shelter' signify that the Holy Prophet ﷺ received such deep love and affection from his grand-father, 'Abd-ul-Muttalib, and after him from his uncle, Abū Ṭalib, who took care of him more than their own children.

Favour [2]

وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَى (And He found you unaware of the way [the Shari'ah], then He guided you....93:7). The word *ḍāll* has two meanings: [1] stray; and [2] unaware. Here it stands for the second meaning. The verse signifies that before Muḥammad ﷺ was commissioned as the Prophet, he was unaware of Divine Shari'ah. He was granted the status of the Prophet ﷺ and thus was guided.

Favour [3]

وَوَجَدَكَ عَائِلًا فَأَغْنَى (and He found you in need, then made you need-free....93:8). The word '*ā'il*' is derived from '*ailah*' which means 'to be in need'. The verse signifies that Allah found him impoverished and enriched him. This happened in the beginning through a business partnership with Sayyidah Khadijah al-Kubrā رضي الله عنها, then once she became his wife and 'Mother of the Faithful', her entire wealth was

devoted to his service.

After elaborating on the three favours of Allah, three injunctions follow:

Injunction [1]

فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ (Therefore, as for orphan, do not oppress him,...93:9). The word *qahr* means 'to treat people who are less powerful in an unfair and cruel way'. In the present context, the verse means: 'Since you were a poor orphan, and Allah sheltered you, do not oppress the orphan.' [In words, 'do not seize their wealth by force and squander it. Do not scorn them, humiliate them or despise them. Rather, you should be kind and gentle to them.'] As a result, the Holy Prophet ﷺ emphasised that the orphan be treated kindly and gently, and has forbidden any hurting attitude towards them. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said that the best house of a Muslim is the one in which there is an orphan who is treated kindly, and with love and affection. The worst house is the one in which there is an orphan who is treated badly. [This is transmitted by Bukhārī in Al-Adab-ul- Mufrad, and by Ibn Mājah and Baghawī, as quoted by Mazḥarī].

Injunction [2]

وَأَمَّا السَّائِلَ فَلَا تَنْهَرْ (and as for the beggar, do not scold him....93:10). The verb *tanhar* is derived from *nahr* which means 'to scold'. The word *sā'il* means 'one who asks'. It includes a person who asks people's wealth, that is, a beggar, and it also includes the one who asks a question of knowledge, that is, an academic investigator. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has forbidden to berate either of them. The best course of action is to give the beggar something. If one is unable to give a beggar anything, one should at least apologise to him politely [so as not to give him any further grief]. Likewise, anyone who is searching knowledge and asks questions, it is forbidden to respond to him harshly and unkindly. The teacher should reply kindly and politely. However, if the investigator is unreasonable in his approach, it is permissible to scold him to the degree that is necessary.

Injunction [3]

وَأَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ (And about the bounty of your Lord, do talk....93:11). The verb *ḥaddith* is derived from *taḥdīth* which means 'to talk' meaning,

'just as you were poor and needy, and Allah made you wealthy, then talk about Allah's favours upon you'. Talking about Divine favours to people is one way of thanking Allah. If a person has done something good to another, he should be thanked. Therefore, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said: "Whoever is not thankful to people on their favours is not thankful to Allah." [This is transmitted by Aḥmad. The chain of authorities are reliable - vide Maḏharī].

The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said: "Whoever has done good to you, you ought to return the good. If you are unable to return the pecuniary good, then praise him in public, because he who praises people in public fulfils his moral obligation." [Al-Baghawī transmitted it from Jābir Ibn 'Abdullah, vide Maḏharī].

Ruling

It is obligatory to offer gratitude to Allah on every favour He has bestowed. (But the way of offering gratitude may be different.) If Allah has granted a person wealth, a part of that wealth may be spent with the sincerity in Allah's way. If Allah has given a person strong body, his bodily strength may be utilised in fulfilling Divine obligations. If Allah has granted a person Divine knowledge, he should impart it to others. [Maḏharī].

Ruling

It is *sunnah* to recite *takbīr* at the beginning of every Sūrah from Sūrah Ḍuḥā to the end of the Qur'ān. The wordings of the *takbīr*, according to Shaikh Ṣāliḥ al-Miṣrī, are as follows:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

'There is no god except Allah and Allah is the greatest'
[Maḏharī].

According to Ibn Kathīr, the *takbīr* may be recited at the end of every Sūrah and, according to Baghawī, it may be recited once at the beginning of every Sūrah. [Maḏharī]. Either way the requirement of *sunnah* will be fulfilled. And Allah knows best!

Note

In most Sūrahs from Sūrah Ḍuḥā to the end of Qur'ān, Allah's special

favours upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his special virtues and characteristics are mentioned. In a few of the Sūrahs, the Day of Judgement and its conditions are mentioned. The earlier part of the Qur'ān asserts the greatness and authenticity of the Qur'ān, while the later part asserts the greatness of the personality to whom the Qur'ān was revealed.

**Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Aḍ-Ḍuḥā
Ends here**

Sūrah Al-Inshirāḥ

(Peace of Heart)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 8 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 8

أَلَمْ نَشْرَحْ لَكَ صَدْرَكَ ﴿١﴾ وَوَضَعْنَا عَنْكَ وِزْرَكَ ﴿٢﴾ الَّذِي أَنْقَضَ
ظَهْرَكَ ﴿٣﴾ وَرَفَعْنَا لَكَ ذِكْرَكَ ﴿٤﴾ فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ﴿٥﴾ إِنَّ مَعَ
الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ﴿٦﴾ فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانصَبْ ﴿٧﴾ وَإِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَارْغَبْ ﴿٨﴾

Did We not cause your bosom to be wide open for your benefit? [1] And We removed from you your burden [2] that had (almost) broken your back, [3] and We raised high for you your name. [4] So undoubtedly, along with hardship there is ease. [5] Undoubtedly, along with hardship there is ease. [6] So when you are free (from collective services), exert yourself (in worship), [7] and towards your Lord turn with eagerness. [8]

Commentary

It was mentioned at the end of the preceding Sūrah that twenty-two Sūrahs from Sūrah Ad-Ḍuḥā to the end of the Qur'ān are mainly concerned with Divine favours conferred upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ and with his greatness. Only a few Sūrahs are concerned with the conditions of the Hereafter or some other subject. Sūrah Al-Inshirāḥ is concerned with special favours that Allah conferred upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Its style is the same as that of the preceding Sūrah - the interrogative style. In the preceding Sūrah, the style was 'Did He not find you...?' [Here the style is]:

أَلَمْ نَشْرَحْ لَكَ صَدْرَكَ (Did We not cause your bosom to be wide open for your benefit?...94:1). The word *sharḥ* literally denotes 'to open, to cause the bosom to be widely opened'. [In the present context] it is to cause the bosom to be wide open to comprehend the Divine mysteries. The verse signifies that Allah illuminated his bosom with wisdom, Divine light and peace and made it spacious, vast and wide as is said in another verse:

فَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ، يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُ، لِلْإِسْلَامِ

'So, he whom Allah wills to give guidance, He opens his heart for Islam [6:125]'

The Holy Prophet's ﷺ bosom was expanded to receive the knowledge and wisdom and the gracious morals and ethical qualities, which the greatest philosophers could not match. As a result of this expansion of heart, *tawajjuh ilal-makhlūq* (attentiveness to the creation) did not disturb his attentiveness to and concentration on Allah. Some of the authentic Traditions report that the angels, with Allah's permission, physically opened the blessed chest of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Some of the commentators interpret this 'expansion of the chest' to refer to the same miracle, as mentioned in Ibn Kathīr and others. And Allah knows best!

وَوَضَعْنَا عَنْكَ وِزْرَكَ الَّذِي أَنْقَضَ ظَهْرَكَ (And We removed from you your burden that had [almost] broken your back...94:2-3). The word *wizr* literally denotes 'burden' and the phrase *naqq-uz-zahr* means 'to break one's back as for instance when a heavy load is put on one's back, it bends'. This verse signifies that Allah had relieved him of his burden that was breaking his back. What was that burden or heavy load? One answer to this question is that now and then the Holy Prophet ﷺ did certain permissible deeds, thinking that they were of benefit and in the interest [of spiritual development]. Later on he discovered that they were not in keeping with wisdom, or they were undesirable. The Holy Prophet ﷺ was conscious of his high status and close proximity to Allah. He regarded even such things as serious infractions. This was naturally a very heavy load that made him grieved. But Allah relieved him of his burden in that a blanket pardon was granted to him and it was declared that he would not be held accountable for such things.

Some commentators say that *wizr* (burden) refers to the effect of revelation. It weighed heavily on him in the initial stages of the

Prophet-hood. He was saddled with a nerve-racking and back-breaking task of raising [a morally degenerated people], through propagation of *Tauḥīd* and elimination of *kufr* and *shirk*, [from the depths of moral turpitude to the peaks of spiritual excellence, and then through them to cleanse and purify the whole of mankind of the dross of iniquity, ignorance and superstition]. The task enjoined:

فَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ

'So, stand firm - as you have been commanded [11:112]'

The Holy Prophet ﷺ used to feel the heavy weight of this task and responsibility. Some narration report that a few strands of his beard had turned grey as a result of this command. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said that the following verse has made me old:

فَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ

'So, stand firm - as you have been commanded [11:112]'

Verses [2-3] give the cheerful news that Allah will remove from him the load which was weighing down his back. The following verses show how the back-breaking load will be removed, and every difficulty will be followed by ease and relief. By means of expansion of bosom, Allah gave the Holy Prophet ﷺ so much of courage that no instance of hardship seemed hardship, and no burden of any magnitude seemed a burden. And Allah knows best!

وَرَفَعْنَا لَكَ ذِكْرَكَ (and We raised high for you your name....94:4). The meaning of raising the name of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is that his blessed name is remembered together with the name of Allah in all the symbols of Islam, like the *kalimah*, the *adhān*, the *iqāmah*, and in sermons from the minarets and pulpits [throughout the world]:

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ
أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

(I bear witness that there is no God worthy of worship except Allah; I bear witness that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah.)

No sensible person utters the Holy Prophet's ﷺ name without respect and honour even though he may not be a Muslim.

Note Carefully

Here three verses mention three favours that are bestowed on the Holy Prophet ﷺ: [1] opening of the bosom widely; [2] removal of the burden; and [3] raising of the name high. Each of the sentence is composed of a verb, an object and between them is a prepositional phrase thus:

شرح صدر

'for your benefit? [1]'

وضع وزر

'from you your burden [2]'

رفع ذكر

'for you your name. [4]'

This indicates the essential characteristic and special greatness of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, in that all this is done for the sake of him.

فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا. إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا (So undoubtedly, along with hardship there is ease. Undoubtedly, along with hardship there is ease....94:6). Grammatically, if the Arabic definite article *al-* is prefixed to an Arabic noun and is repeated with the same definite article *al-*, they refer to the same antecedent. However, if the same noun is repeated without the definite article, they refer to different antecedents. The word *al-'usr* '[the] hardship' in verse [6] is the repetition of *al-'usr* '[the] hardship' occurring in verse [5]. It does not refer to a new hardship. In contrast to this, the word *yusr* 'ease' in both verses occur without the definite article. This indicates that the second *yusr* 'ease' in verse [6] is a different antecedent to the *yusr* 'ease' occurring in verse [5]. Thus it may be concluded that there is only one '*usr* 'hardship' and two *yusr* 'twofold ease'. 'Twofold ease' does not mean twice as much. In fact, it means 'manifold ease'. The verse signifies that only one kind of hardship will face him, but in the wake of it many kinds of ease are assured.

Sayyidnā Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى reports that once the Holy Prophet ﷺ emerged from his home in a very happy mood and, giving cheerful news to his Companions on the basis of the current verse, said: "One hardship cannot overcome twofold ease". Thus history and

biographical books written by Muslims and non-Muslims - all bear ample testimony to fact that the most difficult task, even the seemingly impossible task, became easy for him. The above narration further indicates that the Arabic definite article *al-* signifies that it is an article used to indicate previous knowledge [that is, *al- lil 'ahd*] and refers to the hardship of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his Companions. Allah kept to His promise to them in such a way that the world saw it visibly how in the wake of every hardship the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his Companions experienced the manifold ease that made their task easy. If a person does not achieve 'ease' after 'hardship', it does not contradict this verse. In fact, even now Allah's universal principle applies. One needs to exercise fortitude against hardship, rely on Allah with purity of heart, devote oneself totally to Him, hold onto high hopes for His grace, and one should not despair of His mercy if there is delay in success - He certainly will grant relief after every instance of hardship. [Fawā'id-e-'Usmāniah]. Ḥadīth narratives support this.

The Command for Teachers and Preachers to Remember Allah During Spare Hours

فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانصَبْ. وَإِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَارْغَبْ (So when you are free [from collective services], exert yourself [in worship], and towards your Lord turn with eagerness....94:8). The Holy Prophet ﷺ is commanded in these verses that when he has finished his day's work of teaching and training his followers and other temporal affairs, he should turn to Allah as ever with all his heart, that is, prayers, remembrance of Allah, supplication and seeking Allah's pardon. This is the interpretation assigned to this verse by most commentators. Some scholars have interpreted it differently, but the foregoing interpretation appears to be the closest. The sum total of this interpretation is as follows: The Holy Prophet ﷺ exerted himself greatly to spread the word of Allah and reform human beings. Exerting himself to human reform was his greatest form of 'worship' but it was 'indirect worship' through planning and executing the plan of human reform. The verse purports to say that the indirect worship is not sufficient. So, when he is free from collective services to humanity, he should devote time to turn to Him by carrying out 'direct worship' by turning to Allah in prayer for the success of his efforts, because this 'direct worship' is what man is created for. Probably, that is why the 'indirect worship' has been

mentioned as something that may be finished and one may be free from, because that is based on need, and a believer can free himself from it, but the 'direct worship' of Allah is such that he cannot free himself from it. He has to spend his entire life and expend all his energy in it.

Note

This indicates that scholars [who are involved in education, propagation and human reform] should not be unmindful of 'direct worship'. Some time should be devoted specifically, in privacy, to attentiveness to, and remembrance of Allah as the biography of the righteous predecessors bear testimony to the fact that without it neither education nor preaching can be effective. It would be devoid of light and blessings.

Note

The word *fanṣab* derived from *naṣab* means 'to be tired'. The verse signifies that one should tire oneself when carrying out acts of worship. One should not carry out acts of worship only when one finds it convenient. Binding oneself to a *waḥīfah* (a usual course of optional worships) is itself quite exerting and tiring, no matter how little.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Inshirāḥ
Ends here

Sūrah At-Tīn

(The Fig)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 8 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 8

وَالَّتَيْنِ وَالزَّيْتُونِ ﴿١﴾ وَطُورِ سَيْنِينَ ﴿٢﴾ وَهَذَا الْبَلَدِ الْأَمِينِ ﴿٣﴾ لَقَدْ
خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ ﴿٤﴾ ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ ﴿٥﴾
إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ ﴿٦﴾ فَمَا
يُكَذِّبُكَ بَعْدَ بِالذِّينِ ﴿٧﴾ أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِأَحْكَمَ الْحَكَمِينَ ﴿٨﴾

I swear by the Fig and the Olive, [1] and by Tur, the mount of Sinai, [2] and by this peaceful city, [3] We have created man in the best composition, [4] then We turned him into the lowest of the low, [5] except those who believed and did righteous deeds, because for them there is a reward never ending. [6] So, what can make you, after all this, to deny the Requit? [7] Is Allah not the Greatest Ruler of all the rulers? [8]

Commentary

وَالَّتَيْنِ وَالزَّيْتُونِ (I swear by the Fig and the Olive...95:1). This verse takes an oath by four objects. Two of them are trees, the fig tree and the olive tree. [The third object] is Tur, the mount of Sinai, and the fourth object is the City of Makkah. The two trees have been specified because they possess abundant blessings and advantages in the same way as Tūr and the City of Makkah possess abundant blessings. Some authorities say that the 'fig' and the 'olive' symbolise, in this context, the lands in which these

trees predominate: that is, the countries bordering on the eastern part of the Mediterranean, especially Palestine and Syria. Most of the Prophets lived and preached in these lands, including Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. The latter Prophet ﷺ was made to migrate from here to Makkah. The oaths, in this way, comprehend all the holy places where Allah-inspired men were born and raised as Prophets ﷺ. Syria was the land and home of all the Prophets. Mount Sinai stresses specifically the messengership of Mūsā عليه السلام where Allah spoke to him. 'Peaceful City' refers to Makkah, the birth-place and residence of the Final Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

The subject of the four oaths is: لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ (We have created man in the best composition...95:4). The word *taqwīm* literally denotes 'to set a thing aright or lay the foundation straight or even; or to form something into an appropriate shape in a moderate regulation'. The verse signifies that man has been endowed with the best natural powers and qualities which other creatures have not been endowed with. Physically too he is cast in the best composition - having no parallel in other creatures.

Man is the Most Beautiful of Allah's Creation

Allah has created man the most beautiful of all His creation. Ibn 'Arabī asserts that there is no creature of Allah more beautiful than man, because Allah, besides granting him life, he gave him knowledge, power, speech, hearing, sight, planning and wisdom. All these, in fact, are the qualities of Allah. It is mentioned in a ḥadīth of Bukhārī and Muslim:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَلَقَ آدَمَ عَلَى صُورَتِهِ

'Allah has created Adam in His image'

It could only mean that man has been characterised by some of the qualities of Allah, because Allah is beyond any [physical] shape or image. [Qurtubī].

A Wonderful Story of Human Beauty

Qurtubī, on this occasion, cites a story of 'Īsā Ibn Mūsā Hāshimī. He was a high ranking officer in the royal court of Caliph Abū Ja'far Maṣṣūr. The officer loved his wife very much. Once he was sitting with his wife in a moonlit night and suddenly cried out:

انت طالق ثلاثاً ان لم تكوني احسن من القمر

'You are divorced thrice if you are not more beautiful than the moon.'

As soon as the wife heard this, she went into seclusion and veiled herself, on the grounds that the husband has pronounced three express divorce on her. It was said in joke. However, the law of express divorce is that it becomes effective whether uttered jokingly or seriously. 'Īsā Ibn Mūsā spent the night restlessly and in grief. The next morning, he paid a visit to Caliph Abū Ja'far Maṣṣūr and recounted to him the whole story. Caliph Abū Ja'far Maṣṣūr invited all the jurists of the city and put the case before them. All the jurists unanimously agreed that the divorce has become effective, because no human being can possibly be more beautiful than the moon. There was, however, one scholar, a student of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, who remained silent. Maṣṣūr asked him: "Why are you so quiet?" He recited '*Bismillah*' to the end' and then recited Sūrah Tīn and explained: "Ruler of the Faithful, Allah says that He has created man in the best composition or in the finest mould. Nothing can be more beautiful than man." Having heard this, all the scholars and jurists were perplexed. None of them opposed him. Maṣṣūr ordered that the divorce is not effective.

This indicates that man is the most beautiful creation of Allah outwardly and inwardly, in terms of elegance and attractiveness and in terms of bodily structure. Every limb of the human body is able to move in many different ways. He is able to hold, move and lift various things by moving his hands and arms. The thumb alone is a masterpiece of creation without which man will not be able to hold things. The functioning of the ears, the eyes, the mouth, the teeth, the nose, the chest and the stomach are all wonders in their own right. Gathered together on his head, they form a beautiful and coherent assortment, each one complementing the other. The flexibility of the tongue, the arrangement of the teeth and the mastery of the vocal cords allow him to roar like a lion and sing as beautifully as a nightingale. All this makes human body look like a sophisticated factory where automatic machines are able to accomplish the delicate work. This is the reason why philosophers call man 'microcosm' [a miniature universe as opposed to 'macrocosm' {a large universe}]. The microcosm epitomises the macrocosm. [Qurtubī]

The Ṣūfīs have supported this concept. Some scholars have analysed in detail - from head to toe - to show how man is the epitome of the large universe.

ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ (then We turned him into the lowest of the low...95:5). In the preceding sentence, it was stated that man is created in the best composition and is the most beautiful being. In the prime of his life, man is brimming with strength and vigour and all his faculties are functioning at their best. As opposed to that, this sentence states that when man ages, he physically grows weaker and his health deteriorates all the time. He even begins to lose his physical beauty. He no longer has a good-looking and attractive face. He begins to look uglier. He becomes useless and a burden to others. Other animals, on the contrary, are useful to the end of their lives. Man utilises them for milk, for mounting, for luggage-loading and for myriad of other things. When they are slaughtered or dead, man still utilises their hide, hair, bones and every other part or fibre of theirs usefully. Man, on the other hand, becomes useless when he falls ill or grows old. From the worldly point of view he is unable to do anything. Even when he dies, no part of his body is of any benefit to any man or animal. In short, the phrase 'the lowest of the low' refers to bodily condition. His body bends over and legs can barely carry him. The man who was once supporting others now needs others to support him. [Ḍaḥḥāk and others vide Qurṭubī].

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ (except those who believed and did righteous deeds, because for them there is a reward never ending....95:6). The foregoing interpretation of the preceding verse should not be misunderstood. The exceptive sentence does not mean that the believers will not attain to decrepit old age. It would not be correct to exclude the believers from this, because some of them are also overcome by the senility of old age. The sense, however, is that they do not suffer a big harm due to their physical or mental deterioration in old age. Only those will suffer from it who spent their entire energy on improving their physical condition that has now ended. They shall have no portion of it in the Hereafter. The righteous believers will have an unfailing reward. This verse makes it clear that even after reaching old age, a believer never becomes useless. Even in decrepitude he can accumulate rewards -

comfort and high positions - for the Hereafter that are eternal. During the period of senility when he is unable to do righteous deeds, the good deeds will be recorded in his Record Book which he used to do in good health. Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه narrates that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that when a Muslim falls ill Allah instructs the recording angels to record the good deeds he used to perform in good health. [Al-Baghawī transmitted it in Sharḥ-us-Suunah from Abū Mūsā, and Bukhārī has reported the same rewards for a traveller and a person suffering from a disease.] Here instead of mentioning the rewards and blessings of Paradise for the righteous believers, the verse reads: لَّهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرٌ مَّمْنُونٍ (for them there is a reward never ending.) This could signify that their reward starts in this mortal world [and continues in the Hereafter eternally]. Allah gathers around them in their decrepit old age such sincere companions who benefit from them spiritually until the last moment of their life. They serve them in every possible way. The righteous servants of Allah in decrepitude are productive while generally the senile and people in bad health are thought to be unproductive.

Some commentators say that the statement - رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ (We turned him into the lowest of the low) does not refer to human beings in general. It refers specifically to unbelievers who destroyed the God-given best composition, human perfection, honour and intellect by pursuing physical pleasures. As a result of their ingratitude, they will be turned into the lowest of the low. In this interpretation, the exception - إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا (except those who believed and did righteous deeds, because for them there is a reward never ending) will carry its basic interpretation, in that they will not be turned into the lowest of the low. For those who believed and did righteous deeds, there is a reward that is unending. [Thus in al-Maḥḥarī].

فَمَا يُكَذِّبُكَ بَعْدَ بِالذِّينِ (So, what can make you, after all this, to deny the Requital?...95:7). In the preceding verses man is made to realise that Allah created him, He bestowed on him special favours and the revolution that He brought about in his old age. Man will move from stage to stage, finally reaching the grave and the Hereafter. But he rejects the Hereafter, as a result he is warned. He has seen the scenes of Divine omnipotence and revolutions - how dare he denies and rejects the Hereafter! Is Allah not the Greatest Ruler of all the rulers? [8]

Ruling

Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه narrates that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that while reciting Sūrah At-Tīn, when one reaches the end of it:

أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِأَحْكَمَ السَّكِمِينَ

'Is Allah not the Greatest Ruler of all the rulers? [8]'

one should recite:

بَلَىٰ وَأَنَا عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ

'Yes, indeed, Allah is the Ruler of the rulers, and I bear witness to it.'

The jurists have ruled that it is *mustahab* (preferable/desirable) to recite the words.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah At-Tīn
Ends here

Sūrah Al-‘Alaq (The Clot)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 19 verses and 1 section.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 19

اِقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ﴿١﴾ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ﴿٢﴾ اِقْرَأْ
 وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ ﴿٣﴾ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ﴿٤﴾ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ
 ﴿٥﴾ كَلَّا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَبِطَعَى ﴿٦﴾ أَنْ رَأَاهُ اسْتَغْنَى ﴿٧﴾ إِنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ
 الرُّجْعَى ﴿٨﴾ أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يَنْهَى ﴿٩﴾ عَبْدًا إِذَا صَلَّى ﴿١٠﴾ أَرَأَيْتَ
 إِنْ كَانَ عَلَىٰ الْهُدَىٰ ﴿١١﴾ أَوْ أَمَرَ بِالتَّقْوَىٰ ﴿١٢﴾ أَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ كَذَّبَ
 وَتَوَلَّىٰ ﴿١٣﴾ أَلَمْ يَعْلَمْ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَرَىٰ ﴿١٤﴾ كَلَّا لَئِنْ لَّمْ يَنْتَهِ لَنَسْفَعًا
 بِالنَّاصِيَةِ ﴿١٥﴾ نَاصِيَةٍ كَاذِبَةٍ خَاطِئَةٍ ﴿١٦﴾ فَلْيَدْعُ نَادِيَهُ ﴿١٧﴾ سَنَدْعُ
 الزَّبَانِيَةَ ﴿١٨﴾ كَلَّا لَا تَطِعُهُ وَاسْجُدْ وَاقْتَرِبْ ﴿١٩﴾

Read with the name of your Lord who created (every thing), [1] He created man from a clot of blood. [2] Read, and your Lord is the most gracious, [3] who imparted knowledge by means of the pen. [4] He taught man what he did not know. [5] The fact is that man crosses the limits, [6] because he deems himself to be free of need. [7] Surely to your Lord is to return. [8] Have you seen him who forbids [9] a slave of Allah when he prays? [10] Tell me, if he is on the right path, [11] or bids to piety,

(would the former still forbid him?) [12] Tell me, if he rejects (the true faith) and turns away, [13] does he not know that Allah is watching (him)? [14] No! If he does not desist, We will certainly drag (him) by forelock, [15] a lying, sinful forelock. [16] So let him call the men of his council, [17] We will call the soldiers of the Hell. [18] No! Never obey him, and bow down in sajdah, and come closer. [19]

Beginning of The Qur’ānic Revelation

It is universally agreed that the first five verses of Sūrah Al-‘Alaq or Iqra’ mark the very beginning of Qur’ānic revelation. [Baghawī]. Bukhārī, Muslim, other authentic sources and overwhelming consensus of scholars, ancient and modern, all concur on this point. However, some scholars state that Sūrah Al-Muddaththir was the first Sūrah to be revealed, and yet others say that Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah [The Opening] was revealed first. It is possible to reconcile between these different views as follows: After the revelation of Sūrah Al-‘Alaq or Iqra’, there was a temporary break in the revelation during which the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to be very sad, but after some time, the Angel Jibra’īl appeared to him once again, and he faced the same situation as he faced when the first verses of Sūrah Iqra’ were revealed to him. On this occasion, the opening verses of Sūrah Al-Muddaththir were conveyed to him by the angel. From this point of view, it may be said that the first Sūrah to be revealed after the temporary break was Sūrah Al-Muddaththir. Some of the Companions held the view that Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah was the first Sūrah to be revealed. They probably meant to say that this was the first Sūrah to be revealed in a complete form. Undoubtedly, some verses (of Sūrahs Al-‘Alaq or Iqra’, Al-Muzzammil and Al-Muddaththir) were revealed earlier, but the rest of the verses of those Sūrahs were revealed at later dates. Al-Fātiḥah is the first Sūrah that was revealed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ in its entirety, all seven verses at once. [Maḏharī]

The Holy Prophet's ﷺ First Experience of Revelation

In a lengthy narration, as recorded in the Ṣaḥīḥs of Bukhārī and Muslim, the Mother of the Faithful, Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رضى الله عنها says that revelation to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was started by true dreams. Whatever he saw in a dream would happen in reality as clearly as the light of dawn. Then solitude became dear to him, and he used to seclude

himself for worship in the cave Ḥirā', (a cave in the mount known today as 'Jabal-un-Nūr, which is clearly visible in front of Jannat-ul-Ma'lā, the famous graveyard of Makkah) and therein he devoted himself to Divine worship for several nights before he came back to his family and took provisions for his retirement; then he would return to the Mother of the Faithful, Sayyidah Khadijah رضى الله عنها and take more provisions for a similar period. (The period of his stay in the cave is mentioned differently by different reports, but the report of *ṣaḥīḥain* maintains that it was a month, the whole month of Ramaḍān. Authentic traditions are silent about the mode of worship he adopted during this period. Some scholars have opined that he used to worship according to the Sharī'ah of Nuh, Ibrāhīm and 'Īsā عليهم السلام, but neither any authentic report supports it, nor is it likely, because he was an *'ummiyy* (unlettered). It is, therefore, more likely that his worship was concentration and reflection on Allah Almighty and His omnipotence until the Truth, that is, the revelation came to him while he was in the cave of Ḥirā'; so the angel came to him and said, اقْرَأْ 'Read'. The Holy Prophet replied, ما انا بقارى 'I am not the one who can read'. (The Holy Prophet ﷺ was under the impression that he was directing him to read a written document. Since the Holy Prophet ﷺ could not read or write, he replied accordingly.) Then the angel embraced him and pressed him so hard that he felt extreme pain, then he released him and said, اقْرَأْ 'Read'. The Holy Prophet replied, 'I am not the one who can read'. Then he embraced him and pressed him a second time so hard that he felt extreme pain, then he released him again and said, اقْرَأْ 'Read'. The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied, ما انا بقارى 'I am not the one who can read'. Then he embraced the Holy Prophet ﷺ and pressed him a third time, then he released him and said,

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِى خَلَقَ ﴿١﴾ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ﴿٢﴾ اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ ﴿٣﴾ الَّذِى عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ﴿٤﴾ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ﴿٥﴾

'Read with the Name of your Lord Who created [everything], He created man from a clot of blood. Read, and your Lord is the most gracious, who imparted knowledge by means of the Pen. He taught man what he did not know.'

The Messenger of Allah returned with this message [of five verses] while his heart trembled and he came to Sayyidah Khadijah رضى الله عنها, saying زملونى زملونى 'wrap me up, wrap me up', and she wrapped him up, until the awe left him. (It should be noted that the fear felt by the Holy

Prophet ﷺ was due to the great responsibility delegated to him, and due to the unusual event of seeing an angel in his original form.)

Then he said to Sayyidah Khadījah رضى الله عنها while he related to her what had happened: "I feared for myself." Sayyidah Khadījah رضى الله عنها said: 'Nay, by Allah, Allah will never expose you to disgrace, because you unite the ties of kinship, and bear the burden of the weak, and earn for the destitute, and offer hospitality to the guests, and help (people) in real distress.'

Then Sayyidah Khadījah رضى الله عنها took him to her cousin, Waraqah Ibn Naufal. He was a man who had adopted Christianity (which was a true religion at that time) during the days of Ignorance, and he used to write the Hebrew script, and translate it into Arabic. He was a very old man who had turned blind. Sayyidah Khadījah رضى الله عنها said to him, O Uncle's son! Listen to your brother's son. Waraqah asked him, My brother's son! What have you seen? So the Messenger of Allah related to him what he had seen. Waraqah said to him, This is the very same confidant [angel Jibrā'il عليه السلام] whom Allah sent to Holy Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام; would that I were a young man at this time - would that I were alive when your people would expel you! The Messenger of Allah asked in surprise, "Will they expel me?" He replied. Yes; never has a man appeared with the like of that which you have brought, but he has been held in enmity; and if your time finds me alive, I shall help you with the fullest support. After that, not much time had passed before Waraqah died, and the revelation broke off temporarily. [Bukhārī and Muslim]

The temporary break of revelation, according to Suhailī, lasted for about a year and half. Other reports say that it lasted to about three years. [Maẓharī]

Verse [1] اِقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ (Read with the Name of your Lord, Who created [everything]) In the prepositional phrase *bismi rabbika* [with the name of your Lord], the addition of the word *ismi* is significant in two ways [1] that whenever the Qur'ān is being recited, the reader should begin by reciting the formula بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ "With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful". When Jibrā'il آمين عليه السلام suddenly appeared to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and said 'iqra' (read) , he tendered

apology that he is unable to read or recite, because he is unlettered. The phrase *b-ismi rabbika* points to the fact that under present circumstances you, O Holy Prophet ﷺ, may be 'ummiyy' or unlettered, but Allah has the power to grant you the highest level of knowledge, the most elegant style of oration and eloquence, so that you would surpass and subdue the most educated or literate people, as it became manifest later on. [Mazharī]. [2] Allah has many Beautiful Names, but the blessed name *rabb* is particularly chosen in the verse here probably because it supports and emphasizes the theme that Allah cherishes and sustains the Holy Prophet ﷺ through all the different stages of his development, until he is fully consummated. He can make him read and recite, despite being unlettered. In the relative clause *al-ladhī khalaqa* [Who created], particularly contains the Divine attribute of *takhliq* [creating] presumably because the first Divine favor is *wujūd* or 'existence' as a result of His drawing out beings from the realm of non-existence into the realm of existence. Many other favors of His follow. The verb *khalaqa* [created] is transitive and it requires an object that is absent here. This indicates the verb is used absolutely, and it signifies that the Creator has created the entire universe and every existent thing it contains.

Verse [2] خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ (Created man from a clot of blood.) The previous verse referred to the creation of macrocosm, the large or entire universe in general. In this verse, the phrase is *khalaqa'l-insān* which refers to the creation of microcosm 'the best, noblest or most honourable creation', Man. If analysed carefully, we notice that man is the epitome of macrocosm or the large universe. He is a small scale representation, analogue, or miniature of the large and complex universe. Another reason why man has been particularly mentioned is that the purpose of Prophet-hood, messenger-hood and revelation of the Qur'ān is the implementation of Divine ordinances, injunctions and laws and acting upon them: This is the essential peculiarity of mankind. The word 'alaq, being the plural of 'alaqatun, means 'congealed blood'. The creation of man has passed and passes through various phases. His primordial creation is from the four major elements, that is, earth, water, fire and air. His procreation is from an insignificant and humble state, the sperm which then transforms into congealed blood. This is the primary state of

the embryo which happens after the conception. Then it takes the shape of a lump of flesh and then the skeletal structure is created. ‘*Alaqah*’ is the middle phase in the whole process of creation. The specific mention of ‘*alaqah*’ covers the initial stage and the final stage of the process of creation.

Verse [3] **اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ** (Read, and your Lord is the most gracious.) The command *iqra’* [Read] has been repeated in this verse for two reasons: The first command in verse [1] was for the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself to read or recite. The second command in this verse is to proclaim, convey, communicate and teach or preach. It is not inconceivable that the command *iqra’* is repeated by deliberate design for emphasis. The Divine attribute *al-Akram* 'the Most Gracious' signifies that Allah did not create the world or man for any ulterior motive, for selfish motivation or for His own benefit. He has done it out of His infinite grace, generosity and magnanimity. He endowed upon the universe the great favour of existence without asking for it.

Verse [4] **الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ** (Who imparted knowledge by means of the Pen.) The preceding verse spoke of the creation of man. The current verse speaks of man's education or literacy, because knowledge, as part of education and literacy, distinguishes man from all other animals and creatures, and occupies the position of the crown of creation. There are two means, methods or media through which knowledge is imparted: [1] oral or spoken method or by word of mouth; and [2] Pen or written method. The command *iqra’* [read] at the beginning of Sūrah refers to the oral or spoken method. However, the current verse, which speaks more explicitly about imparting knowledge, speaks of the written method of recording and transmitting knowledge from generation to generation.

Pen and Writing: The First and Most Important Means of Transmitting Knowledge

An authentic narration of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

لَمَّا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ الْخَلْقَ كَتَبَ فِي كِتَابِهِ فَهُوَ عِنْدَهُ فَوْقَ الْعَرْشِ، إِنَّ رَحْمَتِي غَلَبَتْ غَضَبِي

"When Allah created the creation, He inscribed a document which is with Him above the Throne: Indeed My mercy has preceded My anger."

In another narration, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said:

أَوَّلَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ الْقَلَمَ، فَقَالَ لَهُ: اكْتُبْ، فَكُتِبَ مَا يَكُونُ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَمَةِ فَهُوَ عِنْدَهُ فِي
الذِّكْرِ فَوْقَ عَرْشِهِ

"The first thing Allah created was the pen. He told it to write, so it wrote what was to take place till Doomsday. This is with Allah on His Throne." [Qurtubī]

Three Types of Pen

Scholars have said that there are three types of pen in the world: [1] a Pen that Allah created with His own hand and instructed it to write the decree of the universe; [2] the pen of the angels who record the events that are to occur and their magnitude, they also use it to record the deeds of human beings; and [3] the pen of human beings, which they use to reduce their speech to writing. Writing, in fact, is a kind of speech [or a manifestation of it]. Humans are biologically programmed by Allah for speech, and it is thus natural, inborn and innate faculty. [Qurtubī] The leading authority on Tafsīr, Mujāhid, cites from Abū ‘Amr that Allah created four things in the entire universe with His own Creative hand, and the rest of the creation came into being by His cosmic command of *kun* [be] and they became. The four things are: [1] the pen; [2] The Divine Throne; [3] the Garden of Eden; and [4] Holy Prophet ‘Adam عليه السلام.

Who was First Trained in the Writing Skill and Art ?

Scholars have differed on this question. Some say the art and skill of writing was first imparted to the father of mankind, i.e. the prophet ‘Adam عليه السلام and he was the first one to write. [Ka’b Aḥbār]. Others say that this art was first taught to the Holy Prophet Idrīs عليه السلام and he was thus the very first scribe. [Dahḥāk]. Some others have observed that the art and skill of writing is the Divine knowledge given as a gift to anyone whom Allah wills.

Writing Skill and Art: A Great Divine Gift

Sayyidnā Qatādah رحمه الله has stated that Pen is a great Divine gift. If Allah had not granted man the art and skill of writing with pen, it would not have been possible for him to preserve or protect the religion in its pristine form, nor would it have been possible for him to conduct his worldly affairs in the proper manner. Sayyidnā ‘Alī رحمه الله has stated that it

is a great generosity that Allah has granted His servants knowledge of things they did not know. He drew them out from the darkness of ignorance and brought them into the light of knowledge. He urged them to acquire the art and skill of writing as it accrues great benefits. Only Allah is able to keep count of the benefits of writing. All sciences and philosophies are codified by means of pen. The history of the former and latter nations are compiled by means of pen. Their chronicles and monographs are preserved in writing. The Divinely revealed Books are committed to writing, and shall be preserved till the world lasts. 'The pen' is thus able to make great contribution towards the propagation and dissemination of spiritual sciences and Divine secrets revealed by the Qur'ān and of physical sciences to which the study of the Qur'ān imparted a great stimulus. Without the pen, all worldly and religious works will come to a standstill.

Writing Skill and Art: Attitude of Scholars in All Ages

Scholars of the former and the latter times have always realised the stupendous role pen plays in the preservation and transmission of knowledge, as a result they made a great use of it and left behind a huge legacy of books and writings. It is regretful to notice that in this age students and scholars have ignored the importance of this skill and art. As a result, scarcely a few people in a few million people have mastered the art, or developed the skill, of writing. To Allah do we direct our complaint!

Writing Skill and Art: The Reason Why the Holy Prophet ﷺ was not Taught

It is really very significant that mention should have been made of 'Pen' in a Book which was revealed to a person, the Final Messenger ﷺ, who himself did not know how to read and write. The reason for this is the profound Divine wisdom underlying it. Allah had willed that the dignity and status of the Final Messenger should be far above the thinking of the general populace. Allah placed the Holy Prophet ﷺ in an environment which was not favourable for any spontaneous accomplishments, nor was it conducive to any achievements by natural exposure. His birth-place was the rugged and rocky mountainous terrain. The desert of Arabia had fewer plants apart from the date-palms, little water apart from the *zam zam* well and the weather was always dry, far away from civilisation, and completely cut off from the cradle of knowledge and wisdom. The communications system or network was

inaccessible; as a result, the people of Arabia had no contact with Syria, Iraq, Egypt and other civilised areas of the world. Hence, all the Arabs were referred to as 'unlettered' who generally had no respect for knowledge, wisdom and writing. Very rarely people had the opportunity to learn knowledge or to acquire the art and skill of writing. The Holy Prophet ﷺ was born in such bare region, among such illiterate tribes and in such harsh environment. He was never given the opportunity to become literate. It was inconceivable that a person born in such a surrounding will be gifted with knowledge, wisdom and high morals. He was, however, suddenly granted the cloak of Prophet-hood, together with incessant flow of knowledge and wisdom. The greatest of poets and orators of Arabia were subdued by the eloquence of the unlettered Holy Prophet ﷺ. This was his open and overt miracle. Every open-minded person should be able to see with his eye of certainty that his attainments were not the result of acquisition by his own efforts or human exertion, but they were the result of the invisible generosity of Allah Who endowed him with the Prophetic gift. This is the Divine wisdom underlying the reason why the Holy Prophet ﷺ was not trained in the skill and the art of writing. [Adapted from Qurṭubī]

Verse [5] عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ (Taught Man what he did not know." The preceding verse was concerned with a particular means of teaching, namely, 'pen', the written method.

Many other Means of Teaching

The present verse purports to say that the real teacher is Allah, and He has innumerable ways and means, besides pen, to impart knowledge. Therefore, the verse says that Allah taught man things with which he was unacquainted previously. The verse does not mention 'pen' or any other means of teaching. The reason for that is man is taught from the very inception of his life. First, he is gifted with intellect, the greatest means of receiving knowledge. Man, by the right use of intellect, is able to understand many things. Further, his entire environment is the manifestation of the perfect power of Allah and studded with the evidence of Divine power by witnessing which he is able to recognise his Creator. Revelation and inspiration are other means of knowledge. The knowledge of many essential things are learnt intuitively. Intuition is the God-given ability to know or understand things through feelings, rather than by considering facts or evidence. As a result, there is no need for tongue or pen. When a baby is born, it is not conscious of how its environment

operates. However, it instinctively reaches out for the mother's breast, when it feels hungry and feeds itself. Who teaches it and who can teach it? Allah has taught it the 'skill' of crying since its birth. The cry of the baby is the means of satisfying all its needs. When it cries, it becomes a cause of concern for the parents to find out what is wrong. The baby's cry satisfies its hunger, thirst, heat and cold. Who teaches the new-born baby how to cry? All this is instinctive knowledge with which Allah has programmed every living organism, especially man. After the instinctive knowledge, man's knowledge continues to increase by word of mouth, and then by the supra-rational organ of intuition, called the heart. Apparently, there was no need to say مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ (... what he did not know) because normally knowledge is imparted of things that are not known. It is explicitly stated here, probably because man may not assume that the God-given knowledge and skills are the results of his own efforts and exertion. The concluding phrase مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ "what he did not know" has been added in order to make man realise that there was a time when he knew nothing, thus in [16:78] we came across أَخْرَجَكُمْ مِّنْ بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ لَتَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا (And Allah has brought you forth from your mothers' wombs when you knew nothing...). This shows that knowledge is not an ingrained personal excellence of man. It is the gift of the Creator and the Master. [Mazharī]. Some scholars interpret the word 'man' to be referring to the Holy Prophet 'Ādam عليه السلام because he was the first man to whom knowledge was imparted, thus in [2:31] وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا (And He taught 'Ādam the names, all of them...). And others say the reference is to the Final Messenger ﷺ whose knowledge embraces the knowledge of all the previous Prophets.

As stated earlier, these five verses of this Sūrah represent the very beginning of the revelation of the Qur'ān. Verses [6-19] of the Sūrah are of much later date. We assert this on the following grounds: These verses were revealed in connection with an incident in which Abū Jahl prevented the Holy Prophet ﷺ from offering *ṣalāh*. In the initial stages of revelation and Prophet-hood, the Holy Prophet ﷺ had no enemies in Makkah. All used to call him by the title of 'al-Amīn' [the honest or upright]. They respected and loved him. Abū Jahl's enmity and opposition obviously started when the Holy Prophet ﷺ proclaimed his propagation openly, called the people towards Islam publicly, and performed the *ṣalāh* in the Sacred Mosque. *Ṣalāh* was prescribed on the Night of Ascent, (Mi'rāj). Therefore, prevention from *ṣalāh*, referred to in these verses, may not be imagined before that time.

Verses [6-7] كَلَّا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِكَبِيرٍ. أَنْ رَأَاهُ اسْتَغْنَى. (The fact is that man crosses the limits, because he deems himself to be free of need.) Although the verse immediately refers to a particular person, namely, Abū Jahl who insulted the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the statement is general which draws man's attention to one of his weaknesses. So long as man is in need of others, he walks straight; but when he thinks that he does not need anyone, he tends towards transgression, and develops the tendency to wrong-doing, tyranny and oppression. This is generally the behavior of the affluent people, government officials, and people with abundant children and friends or servants. They become purse-proud and intoxicated with the leadership power they exercise on their groups. Abū Jahl was a typical example of this. He was one of the well-to-do and prosperous people of Makkah. All the members of his tribe and inhabitants of the city respected and obeyed him. He became arrogant and insulted the leader of all the Prophets ﷺ - the noblest of creation. The next verse warns such arrogant people about the evil consequences of their behavior.

Verse [8] إِنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الرُّجْعَى (Surely to your Lord is the Return.) The word *ruj'a*, like *bushrā*, is the verbal noun of infinitive - meaning all will be returning to their Lord. The apparent meaning is 'returning to the Lord after death and giving account of good and bad deeds and seeing with their own eyes the evil consequences of arrogance.' The profounder meaning of the verse is that though man has been endowed with great natural powers and has been created in the best make, he errs grievously if he thinks that he can ignore Allah's help and guidance. He constantly stands in need of Divine assistance, because his capacities and capabilities - either as an individual or in his collective capacity - are at best limited. The proud and arrogant man is thus not self-sufficient. If he thinks deeply, he will find that he needs Allah for every movement and pause. If He has apparently not made any member of the human species in need of another, he is at least in need of Allah for all his needs. Thinking that human beings are not in need of one another is also a fallacy. Allah has made man a social being, and as such he cannot satisfy all his needs by himself. Allah has made the social system or network such that all human beings need one another to satisfy their needs some time or the other. Let us consider an example: A fresh morsel of food that goes into our mouth and we swallow it unreflecting, is the result of thousands of human beings and animals who worked hard for a long period of time. It is not

possible for anyone to engage so many thousands of human beings in his service. The same applies to clothes and other needs which require the services of thousands of millions of humans and animals to prepare the needful things. None of them is his servant. Even if he hires them at a rate of wages to work for him, it would not be possible for him to pay them their wages or salary. This secret or mystery dawns upon man when he realizes that the system of preparing all his needs is set into motion by the consummate wisdom of the Creator of the universe. He inspired someone to become a farmer, He cast into another's mind to become a woodcutter or a carpenter, He kindled in someone else's mind to become a blacksmith, He stimulated others to be content with labouring or working for somebody else, He ignited in others the burning desire to be involved in commerce or business, trade or industry. In this way, Allah has set up a *bazaar* of human needs which no government, nor its legal system or an individual could ever set up. A careful thinking along this line must lead us to the natural corollary that إِنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الرُّجْعَىٰ (Surely to your Lord is the Return.", that is, we witness that ultimately all things are under Divine power and wisdom.

Verses [9-10] أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يَنْهَىٰ عَبْدًا إِذَا صَلَّىٰ (Have you seen him who forbids a slave of Allah when he prays?) From here to the end of the Sūrah, the verses allude to an incident. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ was enjoined to perform the *ṣalāh*, he started performing it at first privately, later in public in the Sacred Mosque. Abū Jahl stopped him from performing *ṣalāh* and threatened him that if he were to perform *ṣalāh* and prostrate, he would [God forbid!] trample his neck. Verse [14] أَلَمْ يَعْلَم بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَرَىٰ (Does he not know that Allah is watching?) is in response to the threat made by Abū Jahl, and the verse does not mention whom He is watching. It is of general application - He is watching the pious personality who is performing the *ṣalāh*, as well as the wretched, miserable person who is obstructing the performance of the *ṣalāh*. Here the statement merely asserts that Allah is watching everything and everyone. It does not specify what will happen at Resurrection, because the horrible, terrible and dreadful scenes of that are unimaginable.

Verse [15 - concluding part] لَنَسْفَعًا بِالنَّاصِيَةِ (...We will certainly drag [him] by forelock.) The *nasfa'an* is derived from the infinitive *safuun* which means 'to seize and drag' and the word *nāṣiyah* means 'forelock', that is, the front part of a person's hair that falls forward over the

forehead. When a person's forelock is seized , he becomes helpless in the hands of the seizer.

Verse [19] كَلَّا لَا تَطِيعُہُ وَاسْجُدْ وَاقْتَرِبْ (No! never obey him, and bow down in *sajdah* {Prostration}, and come closer.) The Holy Prophet ﷺ is advised to ignore and disobey Abū Jahl when he stops him from praying. He is asked to be steadfast in prayer and prostration.

Acceptability of Supplication in the Posture of Prostration

It is recorded in Abū Dāwūd on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: اقرب ما يكون العبد من ربه وهو ساجد فاكثروا الدعاء (The closest that a servant can be to his Lord is when he is in prostration. Therefore, make abundant supplications [while prostrating]) Another authentic Tradition states: فانه قمن ان يستجاب لكم (...because it is fitting and proper that supplications be accepted in the state of prostration.)

Ruling

It is valid to supplicate in the supererogatory (*nafl*) *ṣalāh* while prostrating. In certain narrations, special words of the supplications are recorded from the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It is better to recite those transmitted prayers of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. There is no proof or evidence of such supplications in the prostration of obligatory *ṣalāh*, because the obligatory *ṣalāh* needs to be short.

Ruling

A prostration is compulsory for one who recites this verse and listens to it. A narration of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ states that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to prostrate when he recited this verse. Allah knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-‘Alaq
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Qadr (The *Qadr*)

This Sūrah is Makki, and it has 5 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 5

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ ﴿١﴾ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ ﴿٢﴾ لَيْلَةُ
الْقَدْرِ ۚ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ ﴿٣﴾ تَنَزَّلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ
رَبِّهِمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ ﴿٤﴾ سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ ﴿٥﴾

We have sent it (the Qur'an) down in the Night of *Qadr*.
[1] And what may let you know what the Night of *Qadr* is? [2] The Night of *Qadr* is much better than one thousand months. [3] The angels and the Spirit descend in it, with the leave of your Lord, along with every command. [4] Peace it is till the rising of dawn. [5]

Occasion of Revelation

Ibn Abī Ḥatīm has reported from Mujāhid (as *mursal ḥadīth*) that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was told about a *mujāhid* [warrior in the cause of religion] from amongst the Children of Israel who carried weapons of war on his shoulders for a thousand months during which time he never laid down his arms. The Companions were amazed when they heard this. On that occasion, this Sūrah was revealed which describes that worship in the Night of *Qadr* granted to this *Ummah* exceeds by more than a thousand months of *jihād* persistently fought by that warrior. According to another narration of Mujāhid cited in Ibn Jarīr, a worshipper from among the Children of Israel used to worship Allah the whole night, and

as soon as the dawn broke, he would arm himself and fight the whole day. This continued consecutively for a thousand months. This Surah was thus revealed. This shows the superiority of the *Ummah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and that the Night of *Qadr* is a special characteristic of this *ummah*. [Maḏharī].

Meaning of The Night of *Qadr*

One meaning of the word *Qadr* is 'greatness, honour or dignity'. Zuhri and other scholars have assigned this meaning to it. The night is called the Night of *Qadr* because it is a night of greatness, honour, majesty and dignity. Abū Bakr Warrāq has stated that this night is so called because a person becomes a man of honour and dignity on account of repentance, seeking pardon and righteous acts during this night, whilst prior to this he might have lacked honour and dignity on account of unrighteous life he might have led.

Another meaning of the word *Qadr* is 'predestination'. From this point of view, the night is so called because the destiny of individuals and nations that was decided in pre-eternity is assigned to the relevant angels who are appointed for cosmic planning. Every man's age, death, sustenance, rain and other things are measured out to the angels to be implemented for a complete year from one month of Ramaḏān to another. If an individual is destined to perform Ḥajj in the forthcoming year, it will be prescribed. According to Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, there are four angels in charge of cosmic planning: [1] Isrāfīl; [2] Mīkā'il; [3] 'Izrā'il; and [4] Jibra'il عليهم السلام.

It is clearly stated in [44:3-5]

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ مُبَرَّكَةٍ إِنَّا كُنَّا مُنْذِرِينَ ﴿٣﴾ فِيهَا يُفْرَقُ كُلُّ أَمْرٍ حَكِيمٍ ﴿٤﴾ أَمْرًا مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا مُرْسِلِينَ ﴿٥﴾

We have sent it down in a blessed night, (because) We had to warn (people). [3] In that (night), every wise thing is decided [4] through a command from Us. We were to send the Messenger [5]. (44:3-5)

'*Laylatun Mubārakah*' or the 'blessed', according to overwhelming scholars of the Qur'an, refers to the Night of *Qadr*. The angels record and

descend with whatever Allah has destined or decreed for the coming year. Some scholars hold that the 'blessed night' in 44: 3 refers to the fifteenth night of *Sha'bān*, that is, '*Laylatul Barā'ah*' or the 'Night of Immunity'. This view may be reconciled with the former one by holding that the initial Divine decrees are decided on the Night of Immunity, and the details are recorded and handed over to the relevant angels on the Night of *Qadr*. This is supported by a narration of Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه which Baghawī has recorded on the authority of Abūḍ-Ḍuḥā which states that Allah decrees all cosmic matters on the Night of Immunity, but they are only handed over to the relevant angels on the Night of *Qadr*. [Maḏharī].

Date of the Night of *Qadr*

It is explicitly stated in the Qur'ān that the Night occurs in the blessed or auspicious month of Ramaḍān, but its exact date has not been disclosed. As a result, it is disputed and debated among scholars. There are about forty opinions recorded. Maḏharī states that the most authentic opinion is that the Night of *Qadr* occurs in the last ten nights of *Ramaḍān*, but no specific date has been fixed. It could be any of the last ten odd nights which may alternate from year to year. According to authentic Traditions, it could be one of the following nights: 21, 23, 25, 27 and 29. Thus all the apparently conflicting Traditions relating to the odd nights are reconciled. All the Traditions pertaining to the date of the Night are authentic, and there is no need for any convoluted interpretation. Most eminent jurists - like Abā Qilābah, Imām Mālik, Imām Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, Sufyān Thawrī, Ishāq Ibn Rahwaih, Abū Thawr, Muzanī, Ibn Khuzaymah and others - agree that the Night occurs in the last ten odd nights, alternating. Imām Shāfi'ī has two opinions. In one he sides with the majority, and in another he holds that the night is fixed and does not alternate. [Ibn Kathīr].

Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah's رضي الله عنها narration is recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī, according to which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said: "تَحَرَّوْا لَيْلَةَ الْقَدْرِ فِي الْعَشْرِ الْآخِرِ مِنْ رَمَضَانَ" "Look for the Night of *Qadr* in the last ten nights of Ramaḍān." Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه narrates, as recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "فَاتْلَبُوهَا فِي الْوَتْرِ مِنْهَا" "Search for it in the last ten odd nights of Ramaḍān." [Maḏharī].

The Value and Importance of the Night and a Special Du'ā for the Night

The greatest virtue of the Night is mentioned in the Sūrah itself, that is, the acts of worship performed in this single night is better than worship in one thousand months which amounts to eighty-three years and four months. The figure here and elsewhere in the Qur'ān does not signify its precise number, but simply denotes a very large or high number. Allah alone knows how much more or better.

It is recorded in Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "He who spends the Night of *Qadr* in the worship of Allah, all his past sins will be forgiven." Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "All the angels resident at the 'Lote Tree of the Uttermost Boundary' descend in the leadership of Sayyidnā Jibrā'il عليه السلام and greet every believer, man or woman, except one who takes wine or eats pork." Another narration reports that anyone who is deprived of the good of the Night of *Qadr* is in fact deprived of all good. On the Night of *Qadr* some people experience and witness special *anwār* [lights]. However, it may be noted that this is not experienced or witnessed by all and sundry nor is it part of the blessings and reward of the Night. Therefore, people should not concern themselves about it.

Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها once asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ what supplication she should make if she finds the Night. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ advised her to make the following supplication: **اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنَّكَ عَفُوٌّ تَحِبُّ الْعَفْوَ فَاعْفُ عَنِّيْ** "O Allah! Verily, You are the Oft-Pardoning, You love to pardon, so do pardon me." [Qurṭubī].

Revelation of the Holy Qur'ān

Verse [1] **اِنَّا اَنْزَلْنٰهُ فِيْ لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ** "We sent it [the Qur'ān] down in the Night of *Qadr*." This verse makes explicit that the Holy Qur'ān was revealed on the Night of *Qadr*. This could have one of two meanings: [1] the entire Holy Qur'ān was revealed on this Night from the Preserved Tablet. Then Sayyidnā Jibrā'il عليه السلام, according to the exigency of circumstances, brought it down to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ piecemeal over a period of twenty-three years; and [2] it is related that the first revelation,

consisting of the opening verses of Sūrah [96], took place in the month of Ramaḍān on the Night of *Qadr*, when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was at his devotion in the cave of Hira'. The rest of the Qur'an was revealed little by little according to the need of different occasions.

All Heavenly Books were revealed in Ramaḍān

Sayyidnā Abū Dhar Ghifārī رضي الله عنه narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm's عليه السلام Scriptures were revealed on 3rd of Ramaḍān; Torah was revealed on 6th of Ramaḍān; Injīl was revealed on 13th of Ramaḍān; Zabūr was revealed on 18th of Ramaḍān; and the Holy Qur'an was revealed on 24th of Ramaḍān." [Mazharī].

Descent of the Angels and the Spirit with Divine Decrees

Verse [4] تَنَزَّلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ (The angels and the Spirit descend in it, with the leave of their Lord, along with every command.) 'Spirit' here refers to Jibra'il عليه السلام.

Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "When the Night of *Qadr* occurs, Jibra'il عليه السلام descends on the earth with a huge throng of angels and all of them pray for every servant of Allah, man or woman, busy in *ṣalāh* or *dhikr*, to be blessed by Allah." [Mazharī]. In the phrase مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ (along with every command), the preposition *min* is used in the sense of 'with' as in [13:11] مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ يَحْفَظُونَهُ. The verse under comment means the angels bring down, during the Night of *Qadr*, the decree for everything destined to occur in the coming year. Some of the commentators, like Mujāhid and others, say that the phrase مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ *min kulli amrin* is syntactically related to *salām*, and the word 'Amr means 'every thing'. Thus they interpret the statement to mean: 'The night is a security from every evil, harm and calamity.' [Ibn Kathīr].

Verse [5] سَلَامٌ (Peace it is till the rising of dawn.) The word *Salām* [peace] stands for a complete sentence meaning 'it is all peace, equanimity and complete goodness, having no evil in it.' [Qurṭubī]. Some scholars treat the word *Salāmun* as a sentence qualifying مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ *min kulli amrin*, meaning 'the angels come with every such matter which is good and peace'. [Mazharī].

هِيَ حَتَّى مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ The concluding expression of the verse means the blessings of the Night of *Qadr* are not restricted to any particular part of



the night. They start descending at the fall of night and continue till the break of dawn.

Special Note

According to there verse 'The Night of Power is better than a thousand months' which equals eighty-three years and four months. Obviously, each year will contain a *laylatul Qadr* which will be better than a thousand months. As a result, the Night of *Qadr* will recur *ad infinitum*, that is, repeat or continue without an end. For this reason, some of the commentators say the expression 'more than a thousand months' does not include nights of *Qadr*. Thus this should not pose any problem. [Ibn Kathīr on the authority of Mujāhid].

On account of geographical positions, the time will vary from place to place. As a result, the Night of *Qadr* will not occur in all the regions of the world simultaneously. This is not a problem because people of each location should calculate and consecrate the night and receive its blessings according to their geographical position. Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best.

Ruling

If anyone performs the 'Ishā' and Fajr *ṣalāhs* in congregation, he will receive the blessings and reward of the Night of *Qadr*. The more one performs acts of worship in this night, the more he shall receive its blessings. It is recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim that Sayyidnā 'Uthmān  narrates that the Messenger of Allah  said: "If a person performs his 'Ishā' *ṣalāh* in congregation, he will attain the blessings of spending half the night in devotion; and if he performs Fajr *ṣalāh* in congregation, he will attain the blessings of spending the entire night in devotion."

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Qadr
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Bayyinah

(The Clear Proof)

This Sūrah is Madani, and it has 8 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 8

لَمْ يَكُنِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ مُنْفَكِّينَ حَتَّى تَأْتِيَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَةُ ﴿١﴾ رَسُولٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ يَتْلُو صُحُفًا مُطَهَّرَةً ﴿٢﴾ فِيهَا كُتِبَ قِيمَةٌ ﴿٣﴾ وَمَا تَفَرَّقَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَةُ ﴿٤﴾ وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ لَا حُنَفَاءَ وَيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَذَلِكَ دِينُ الْقِيَمَةِ ﴿٥﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمْ شَرُّ الْبَرِيَّةِ ﴿٦﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ ۖ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمْ خَيْرُ الْبَرِيَّةِ ﴿٧﴾ جَزَاءُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ۖ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِيَ رَبَّهُ ۚ ﴿٨﴾

Those who disbelieved from among the People of the Book, and the polytheists, were not (expected) to desist (from their wrong beliefs) unless there came to them a clear proof, [1] a messenger from Allah who recites the

purified scrolls [2] containing (right and) straight writings. [3] And those who were given the Book did not disagree but after the clear proof came to them, [4] while they were not ordered but to worship Allah, making their submission exclusive for him with integrity, and to establish *ṣalāh* and pay *zakāh*. And that is the way of the straight religion. [5] Surely those who disbelieved from among the People of the Book and the polytheists will be in the fire of Jahannam, in which they will be living forever. Those are the worst of all human beings. [6] As for those who believed and did righteous deeds, they are the best of all human beings. [7] Their reward, with their Lord, is gardens of eternity beneath which rivers flow in which they will be abiding forever. Allah is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him. That is for him who has awe of his Lord. [8]

Situation of the People of the Book and of the Pagan Arabs before the advent of the Final Messenger of Allah ﷺ

Verse [1] draws attention to the situation of the world before the advent of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: The entire world was sunk deeply in the darkness of ignorance, superstition, corruption, disbelief and paganism. When the whole world was so benighted, the infinite grace, mercy and wisdom of the Lord of the worlds bubbled up to dispel the darkness, to cure the obnoxious diseases and to dissipate the universally prevailing calamities. The moral and spiritual maladies were acute, excruciating, serious and severe. As a result, there was a need for an effective, expert and a competent healer who would be able to cure them. Such a healer was raised in the person of the Final Messenger of Allah ﷺ who is described as *al-Bayyinah* 'The Clear Proof'. The healer came with a Book. Now follows some of the important characteristics of the Holy Qur'ān.

Verses [2-3] يَتْلُوا صُحُفًا مُطَهَّرَةً. فِيهَا كُتِبَ قَيِّمَةٌ (a messenger from Allah who recites the purified scrolls containing [right and] straight writings. - 98:2,3) The verb *yatlū* is derived from the infinitive *tilāwah*, meaning 'to read out or to recite'. However, not every reading or reciting is *tilāwah*, but only the one that is very closely followed according to the teacher's instruction. Probably, this is the reason why the word *tilāwah* is specifically used, in common idiom, for 'the recitation of the noble Qur'ān'

. The word *ṣuḥuf* is the plural of *ṣaḥīfah* and it refers to 'a leaf or a page of a book or some leaves of paper on which something is written'. The word *kutūb* is the plural of *kitāb* and it may mean: [1] a leaf or page of a book or some leaves of paper on which something is written. From this point of view, the words *kutūb* and *ṣuḥuf* are synonyms; or [2] now and then the word *kitāb* [pl. *kutūb*] is used in the sense of a 'writ' as in [8:68] لَوْلَا كُتِبَ مِنَ اللَّهِ سَبَقٌ "Had there not been a writ from Allah which came earlier..." the word *kitāb* is used in the sense of a 'writ'. In this context, the second sense seems to fit in more appropriately because if it is taken in the first sense, the words *kutūb* and *ṣuḥuf*, being synonyms, the prepositional phrase *fīhā* is rendered meaningless. The pronoun *-hā* in the phrase refers to *ṣuḥuf*, and the two statements would mean: 'reciting purified written pages in which are true written pages'. This is not in keeping with the lofty rules and principles of Qur'ānic eloquence.

The word مُطَهَّرَةٌ *mutaḥharatan* [purified] is an adjective qualifying the noun *ṣuḥuf* [pages/scrolls]. According to Ibn 'Abbās ؓ, the Scriptures are completely free from all possible flaws, forgeries, doubt, hypocrisy and deviations. The word *qayyimah* is used in the sense of 'straight', and is the adjective of the noun *kutūb*, and it means its laws, ordinances and injunctions are upright, straight, just and balanced. It could also mean 'lasting and permanent'. In this instance, the phrase would signify that the Divine injunctions of the Holy Qur'ān will last permanently till the Day of Judgement. The verse thus purports to say that the sending of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ [as the Clear Proof] was essential to the transformation of the people of earlier revelations and the pagans who had ended up in disbelief and could not have departed from their erring ways without the help of his ﷺ Prophetic mission. His ﷺ mission was to recite the pure scrolls to them which contained clear Divine injunctions. Initially he ﷺ did not recite from the Scriptures but from his memory, but the sense here is that he recited to them a discourse that was later written and preserved in scrolls. The Qur'ān [as the Clear Proof] is the compendium of all that is good, lasting and immutable teachings.

Verse [4] وَمَا تَفَرَّقَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَ تَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَةُ (And those who were given the Book did not disagree but after the Clear Proof came to them.) The verb *tafarraqa* here means 'to deny, reject or differ and disagree'. The

verse means to say that the People of the Book had eagerly awaited the advent of a great Holy Prophet ﷺ about whom clear prophecies were found in their Scriptures, clear description of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was given, in that the Qur'ān would descend upon him and it would be compulsory for them to obey and follow him, but when he appeared in fact, then instead of accepting him, they rejected him. The Qur'ān points out that there was a complete agreement among the Jews and the Christians that the Final Messenger ﷺ will make his appearance, as in [2:89] "وَكَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ يُسْأَلُونَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ...while earlier, they used to seek help against those who disbelieved..." That is, the Torah had in several places foretold the coming of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. In fact, the Jews themselves used to tell the pagan Arabs that a new Prophet was soon to come who will vanquish them, and the Jews claimed that they would be with him, so they would be victorious. Further in [2:89] the Qur'ān states "فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ مَا عَرَفُوا كَفَرُوا بِهِ ...yet when there came to them that they did identify, they denied it..." The phrase 'that they did identify' could refer to the 'Final Messenger' ﷺ or the 'new Divine Book [the Qur'ān]' or the 'religion of Truth'. The same theme runs through the verse under comment: Many people accepted the new Prophet ﷺ, the new Book and the new religion in terms of the prophecies made in their revealed Scriptures, but a large number, especially the Christians, rejected them. It is a strange phenomenon that before his advent they believed in him without a single dissenting voice, but when he appeared as the Clear Proof, dissention arose and a large number rejected him while a small number believed in him.

Since this phenomenon was restricted to the People of the Book, it did not include the pagans, unlike verse [1] which includes the pagans also. Allah knows best!

Verse [5] **وَذَلِكَ دِينُ الْقَيِّمَةِ** (And that is the way of the straight religion.) The word *qayyimah* [the straight] is apparently the qualifier of the noun *kutūb* [Books] which occurred earlier. Some treat the adjective as qualifying the noun *millah* [religion]. The verse purports to say that Allah commanded the People of the former Scriptures that they should render full and sincere obedience to Divine commandments, that is, to worship Allah alone. They should also establish the regular prayers and

pay the obligatory alms. Then the Qur'an reminds them that this is not their distinctive feature exclusively. All former religions that are upright and received Books from Allah have the same features. This is the true religion of all the Prophets ﷺ that they preached to their respective people. It would appear that the phrase *kutubun qayyimah* [(right and) straight writings], contextually, refers to the Qur'ānic ordinances and injunctions. From this point of view, the verse would signify that the ordinances and injunctions of the Shari'ah of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ are exactly the same as those that were given to them in their revealed Scriptures. They were not divergent so that they could find a pretext to oppose.

Verse [8] رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ط ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِيَ رَبَّهُ (Allah is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him; that is for him who fears his Lord.) This verse points to the highest stage of spiritual development of the inmates of Paradise, that is, the Divine pleasure with no danger of Divine displeasure. This is the greatest reward with which the people of faith will be blessed. The God-fearing people are well-pleased with Him because of the comprehensive favours He has given them. Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd Khudrī ؓ narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

"Undoubtedly, Allah shall address the inmates of Paradise: يَا أَهْلَ الْجَنَّةِ 'O Inmates of Paradise!'"

They will reply: لَبَّيْكَ رَبَّنَا وَسَعْدَيْكَ وَالْخَيْرُ كُلُّهُ فِي يَدَيْكَ Our Lord, we are present and ready to carry out Your orders. All good is in Your control.'

Allah shall ask them: هَلْ رَضِيتُمْ Are you happy?'

They will submit: 'How can we not be happy when You have given us what You have not bestowed on any of Your creation?'

Allah will tell them: 'Shall I not grant you something superior to all of this?'

They will exclaim: 'What can be superior to this?'

Allah will reply: 'I shall grant you My pleasure, and I will never be angry with you in the future.'" [Transmitted by al-Bukhārī vide Mazḥarī].

It should be noted here that there are two types of *riḍā'* [pleasure]:

one in general sense; and second in specific or higher sense. In the general sense, *riḍā' bil-qadr* (i.e. to be pleased with every decree of Allah) is part of the obligations of a servant of Allah. A consummated slave is only ever satisfied and content with Allah Himself, and thus sincerely accepts the Divine decree. However, here the word is used in the higher sense, that is, Allah bestows upon a slave all his specific wishes and ambitions without leaving out any of them as in [93:5] وَلَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضَى (And of course, your Lord will give you so much that you will be pleased.) Here also the word '*riḍā'*' means the fulfillment of every wish of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. When this verse was revealed, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ expressed his wish and ambition that he would not be pleased until every single believer is taken out of Hell. [Maḏharī]

Verse [8 - the concluding phrase] ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِيَ رَبَّهُ (...That is for him who has awe of his Lord.) The word 'fear' or 'awe' here is not used in the sense of an 'agitated, disturbed or perturbed feeling' which we naturally have for an enemy, a beast, a ferocious animal or an obnoxious thing that might harm us. '*Khashyatullah*' (Allah's awe) is, on the contrary, a feeling of deep, reverential awe that leads man to Allah's obedience. It is the awe of Allah's Majesty and His Incomparability that makes the perfect slave do every work under every circumstance to attain the Divine pleasure and evade every occasion of His displeasure. This is the axis on which rotates the religious perfection and all bounties of the Hereafter.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Bayyinah
Ends here

Sūrah Az-Zilzal

(The Quake)

This Sūrah is Madanī, and it has 8 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 8

إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ زِلْزَالَهَا ﴿١﴾ وَأَخْرَجَتِ الْأَرْضُ أَثْقَالَهَا ﴿٢﴾ وَقَالَ
الْإِنْسَانُ مَالَهَا ﴿٣﴾ يَوْمَئِذٍ تُحَدِّثُ أَخْبَارَهَا ﴿٤﴾ بِأَنَّ رَبَّكَ أَوْحَى لَهَا
﴿٥﴾ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَصْدُرُ النَّاسُ أَشْتَاتًا لِّيُرَوْا أَعْمَالَهُمْ ﴿٦﴾ فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ
مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ ﴿٧﴾ وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ ﴿٨﴾

When the earth will be trembled with its quake, [1] and the earth will bring forth its burdens, [2] and man will say, "What has happened to it?" [3] That day it will describe all its happenings, [4] because its Lord will have so commanded it. [5] That day the people will come back (from the place of reckoning) in different groups, so that they may be shown (the fruits of) their deeds. [6] So, whoever does good (even) to the weight of a particle shall see it. [7] And whoever does evil (even) to the weight of a particle shall see it. [8]

The Merits of Surah Az-Zilzal

Sayyidnā Anas and Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنهما report that the Messenger of Allah said that Sūrah Al-Zilzāl equals half the Qur’ān, Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ equals a third of the Qur’ān and Sūrah Al-Kāfirun equals a quarter of the Qur’ān. [Transmitted by al-Tirmidhī, al-Baghawī and al-Maḥzarī].

The Scene of the Day of Resurrection

Verse [1] إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ زِلْزَالَهَا (When the earth will be trembled with its quake.) It is not clear whether this earthquake refers to the convulsion that will take place in the world before the 'first blowing of the trumpet', as is mentioned in connection with the portents of the Doomsday, or it refers to the quake that will occur after the 'second blowing' when the dead bodies will be resurrected and thrown out of their graves. Narratives and views of the commentators differ on this issue. It is not inconceivable that many quakes and convulsions would occur: first, before the 'first blowing'; and second, after the 'second blowing' at the time of raising the dead. Here it probably refers to the second quake, and the context supports it, because the Sūrah later on describes the scenes of the Day of Resurrection, such as reckoning, weighing and evaluating of deeds, and recompense. Allah knows best. [Maḡharī]

Verse [2] وَأَخْرَجَتِ الْأَرْضُ أَثْقَالَهَا (and the earth will bring forth its burdens.) Muslim has recorded in his Ṣaḥīḥ from Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

"The earth will throw out the pieces of its liver [contents]. Gold and silver will come out like columns. A murderer will come and say: 'I killed for this ?' The one who broke the ties of kinship will say: 'For this I severed the ties of kinship?' The thief will say: 'For this I got my hand amputated?' Then they will leave it there, and no one will take anything from it."

Verse [7] فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ (So, whoever does good [even] to the weight of a particle shall see it.) The word 'good' here refers to what is good in terms of Sharī'ah, that is, only a good deed done in the wake of faith is recognized by Allah. Any good deed done in the state of disbelief is not recognized, and consequently it will not be rewarded in the Hereafter, though it might have been rewarded in this world. It is argued on the basis of this verse that anyone who has an atom's weight of faith will eventually be taken out of Hell. The reason being that, according to the promise made in this verse, man must reap the fruit of his righteousness in the Hereafter. If he has not done any righteous deeds, faith itself is a great righteousness. Thus no matter how sinful a believer may be, he will

not be condemned to Hell for good. On the other hand, if a non-believer has done tons of good deeds, they will be rendered vain in the Hereafter on account of lack of faith. He will, however, receive reward for them here in this world.

Verse [8] وَمَنْ يَّعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ (And Whoever does evil [even] to the weight of a particle shall see it.) By 'evil' here is meant the evil for which the evil-doer has not repented. The Qur'ān and the Sunnah bear ample testimony to the fact that any sinner who sincerely repents for his sins Allah will most certainly accept his repentance. However, the sins for which the sinners have not repented in this world shall certainly bring their results, no matter how trivial or petty they might have been in their appearance. That is why the Messenger of Allah ﷺ warned Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها to beware of the sins that are belittled, for indeed they will be taken account of by Allah." [Transmitted by Nasā'ī and Ibn Mājah].

Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ says that this verse is most robust and comprehensive verse of the Holy Qur'ān. Sayyidnā Anas ؓ in a lengthy narration reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ referred to this verse as "الفائدة الجامعة" the unique, most comprehensive verse".

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Az-Zilzāl
Ends here

Sūrah ‘Al-Ādiyāt

(The Running Horses)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 11 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 11

وَالْعَدِيَّتِ ضَبْحًا ﴿١﴾ فَالْمُورِيَّتِ قَدْحًا ﴿٢﴾ فَالْمُغِيرَاتِ صُبْحًا ﴿٣﴾
فَأَثَرْنَ بِهِ نَقْعًا ﴿٤﴾ فَوَسَطْنَ بِهِ جَمْعًا ﴿٥﴾ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَكَنُودٌ
﴿٦﴾ وَإِنَّهُ عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ لَشَهِيدٌ ﴿٧﴾ وَإِنَّهُ لِحُبِّ الْخَيْرِ لَشَدِيدٌ ﴿٨﴾ أَفَلَا
يَعْلَمُ إِذَا بُعِثَرَا مَا فِي الْقُبُورِ ﴿٩﴾ وَحُصِّلَ مَا فِي الصُّدُورِ ﴿١٠﴾ إِنَّ
رَبَّهُم بِهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّخَبِيرٌ ﴿١١﴾

I swear by those (horses) that run snorting, [1] then those that create sparks by striking (their hoofs) on the stones, [2] then those that invade at morning, [3] and raise a trail of dust therein, [4] then enter, at the same time, into the centre of the (opposing) host, [5] man is, indeed, very ungrateful to his Lord, [6] and he himself is a witness to that fact. [7] And in his love for wealth, he is very intense. [8] Does he not then know (what will happen) when all that is contained in the graves will be overturned, [9] and all that is contained in the hearts will be exposed. [10] Surely your Lord, that day, will be fully aware of them. [11]

Place of Revelation

According to Sayyidnā Ibn Mas‘ūd, Jābir, Ḥasan Baṣrī, ‘Ikramah and

‘Aṭā’ رَحِمَهُمُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى, Sūrah Al-‘Ādiyāt was revealed in Makkah and, according to Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās, Anas, Imām Mālik and Qatādah, the Sūrah was revealed in Madīnah. [Qurṭubī].

In this Sūrah Allah describes the special features of war-horses or chargers, and swears by them. The subject of the oath states that man is very ungrateful to his Lord. It has been explained time and again previously that it is the prerogative of Allah to swear oath by any of his creatures to recount an event or set down ordinances. It is not permitted for any of the human beings to take oath by any of the creatures. The purpose of swearing an oath is to confirm or give weight to a subsequently stated truth. It is also mentioned earlier that when the Holy Qur’ān swears an oath by an object, it has some nexus with the subject of the oath. Here the hard tasks of the war-horses are called to bear testimony to the fact that man is very ungrateful for Allah's favours. In other words, man needs to look at the horses, especially the war-horses, who risk their lives to travel under very dangerous and difficult conditions, especially in the battlefields where they follow the commands of their masters, whereas man has not created them, he has not even created the fodder he gives to them. His task is merely to give them the fodder that Allah has created. The horses recognize and acknowledge this little favor man does to them, and are prepared to risk their lives and bear the greatest of hardships. As against this, Allah has created man with an insignificant drop of sperm and endowed him with high faculties, abilities, intellect and senses to perform various types of tasks, thus making him the crown of His creation. He [Allah] provided him with all types of food. Facilities are created for all his needs and necessities in an amazing manner. But man does not recognize and acknowledge any of these sublime favors, nor does he express his gratitude to his Creator.

Lexicographical Analysis

The word عَادِيَات *‘ādiyāt* is derived from the root ‘*adw*’ which means ‘to run’. The دَابَّ *dabh* means ‘the sound coming out of the chest of a horse when it runs fast and breathes laboriously; panting.’ The word مُؤْرِيات *mūriyāt* is the active participle of the infinitive of إِرَاءَ *‘irā’*. The infinitive means ‘to strike or produce fire with a particular piece of wood.’ The word قَذَحَ *qadh* means ‘to strike or produce fire with a flint; striking sparks of

fire when the horse runs fast on a rocky ground with horse-shoes on'. The word مُغِيرَات *mughīrāt* is active participle of the infinitive إِغَارَة *ighārah*. The infinitive means 'to attack, or make a sudden hostile excursion upon, an enemy'. The word *ṣubḥ* means 'morning or dawn'. This time has been specifically mentioned because it was the practice of Arabs to attack their enemy at dawn, and not at night in order to show off their bravery. They thought making a hostile excursion on the enemy in the darkness of night was an act of cowardice. The word أَثَرَنَ *atharna* is derived from 'ithārah, which means 'to raise dust'. The word نَفْع *naq'* means 'dust'. This implies that the dust became stirred up and spread upon the horizon, especially in the morning when the horses run fast. Normally, this is not the time for clouds of dust to fly in this way, unless it was caused by very fast running.

Verse [100:5] فَوَسَطْنَ بِهِ جَمْعًا (then enter, at the same time, into the centre of the [opposing] host) In other words, they penetrate into the centre of the enemy forces without the least degree of fear.

The word *kanūd*, (100:6) according to Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى, refers to the one who counts the calamities that befall him, and forgets Allah's favours. Abū Bakr Wasiṭī said that *kanūd* is the one who spends the bounties of Allah for sinful purposes. Tirmidhi said that *kanūd* is the one who looks at the bounty, and not at the Bounteous Lord. In short, all these interpretations lead to the sense of 'ungratefulness to favours and bounties' and hence the expression *kanūd* means 'ungrateful'.

Verse [100:8] وَإِنَّهُ لِحُبِّ الْخَيْرِ لَشَدِيدٌ (and in his love for wealth, he is very intense.) Literally, the word *khair* means 'any good thing'. Idiomatically, the word *khair*, in Arabic, means 'wealth' implying that 'wealth' is an embodiment of goodness and benefit. However, some type of wealth can involve man in untold misery. In the Hereafter, this will be the position of all wealth acquired through unlawful means. Sometimes, wealth in this world too can prove to be nuisance and disaster. Nonetheless, according to Arabic idiom, worldly goods in this verse have been described as *khair* as the same word in another verse [2:180] إِنْ تَرَكَ خَيْرًا "...he leaves some wealth...". In this verse as well the word *khair* means 'wealth'.

To recap, having taken oath by war-horses, the subject states two

points: [1] man is ungrateful or he is a blamer of his Lord who remembers misfortunes and forgets His favours; and [2] he is passionate in his love for wealth. Both these points are evil, rationally as well as from the Shari‘ah point of view. These statements warn man against these evils. The evil of ingratitude is quite obvious and needs no elaboration, but the evil of man's violent love for wealth is not that obvious, and needs some elaboration. Wealth is the axis of man's needs and necessities. Shari'ah has not only permitted its acquisition, but it has also made its acquisition obligatory to the degree of his needs. Therefore, what is condemned in the verse is either the 'intense' or excessive love for wealth that makes one neglectful to one's obligations, and oblivious of the divine injunctions, or the sense is that earning wealth, even saving it according to one's needs is though permissible, having its love in the heart is bad. Let us consider the following illustration: When man feels the need to answer the call of nature, he does it out of necessity. In fact, he makes arrangements for it, but he does not develop love or passion for it in his heart. Likewise, when he falls sick and takes medication, or even undergoes surgery, but he does not develop attachment for it in his heart. He does it only out of necessity. The believer should treat the wealth in this way: A believer should acquire wealth, as Allah has commanded him, to the extent of his need, save it, look after it and utilize it whenever and wherever necessary, but his heart should not be attached to it. How elegantly Maulānā Rūmī رحمه الله تعالى has put it in one of his verses!

آب اندر زیر کشتی پُشتی است..... آب در کشتی هلاک کشتی است

"As long as the water remains under the boat, it helps the boat [to sail]; but if the water seeps into the boat, it sinks it."

Likewise, as long as the wealth floats around the boat of heart, it would be useful; but when it seeps into the heart, it will destroy it. Towards the conclusion of the Sūrah a warning has been sounded against these two evil qualities of man for which he will be punished in the Hereafter.

Verses [100:9-11] أَفَلَا يَعْلَمُ إِذَا بُعْثِرَ مَا فِي الْقُبُورِ وَحُصِّلَ مَا فِي الصُّدُورِ. إِنَّ رَبَّهُمْ بِهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّخَبِيرٌ
(Does he not then know [what will happen] when all that is contained in the graves will be overturned, and all that is contained in the hearts will

be exposed. Surely your Lord, that day, is fully aware of them.) Divine retribution will be meted out, in the Hereafter, to each person commensurate with his deeds, good or bad, as Allah is well-aware of them. Therefore, it would be wise for man to abstain from ingratitude, and he should not have such a violently passionate love for wealth and indulgence in worldly riches as to be unable to separate the good from the bad.

Special Note

The current set of verses describes these evil qualities of man in general terms, while Prophets عليهم السلام, friends of Allah and many of His righteous servants are free from these evil qualities or from any earthly attachments. They acquire wealth through lawful means and abstain from acquiring it through unlawful means. They are ever so grateful to Allah for the wealth He has given them and spend it in the way of Allah. So how these evils are attributed to man in general terms? The answer is that most people have these evil qualities, but this does not imply that all, without any exception, are characterized by these qualities. The upright people are excluded from the general statement. Some of the scholars restrict the word 'man' to 'unbelievers'. These two evil qualities are the essential characteristics of unbelievers, and if they are found in a Muslim [God forbid!], he needs to reflect and be careful. Allah knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-‘Ādiyāt
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Qāri'ah (The Striking Event)

This Sūrah is Makki, and it has 11 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 11

الْقَارِعَةُ ﴿١﴾ مَا الْقَارِعَةُ ﴿٢﴾ وَمَا أَذْرِكَ مَالِقَارِعَةً ﴿٣﴾ يَوْمَ يَكُونُ
النَّاسُ كَالْفَرَاشِ الْمَبْثُوثِ ﴿٤﴾ وَتَكُونُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ الْمَنْفُوشِ
﴿٥﴾ فَأَمَّا مَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ ﴿٦﴾ فَهُوَ فِي عِيشَةٍ رَاضِيَةٍ ﴿٧﴾ وَأَمَّا
مَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ ﴿٨﴾ فَأُمُّهُ هَاوِيَةٌ ﴿٩﴾ وَمَا أَذْرِكَ مَا هِيَةَ ﴿١٠﴾ نَارُ
حَامِيَةٍ ﴿١١﴾

The Striking Event! [1] What is the Striking Event? [2] And what may let you know what the Striking Event is? [3] (It will happen) on a day when people will be like scattered moths, [4] and the mountains will be like carded wool. [5] Then, the one whose scales (of good deeds) are heavy [6] will be in a happy life. [7] But he whose scales are light, [8] his abode will be Abyss. [9] And what may let you know what that (Abyss) is? [10] A blazing fire! [11]

Human Deeds, Good or Bad, will be Weighed

This Sūrah mentions the weighing of human deeds. He whose scales are heavy will be led to Paradise, and he whose scales are light will be led to Hell. Please see Mā'ariful Qur'an, Vol. 3/ pp 539-547, for a full and complete analysis of the Weighing of human deeds. The analysis also

allays the doubts raised against the concept of weighing of deeds.

We have also explained there that it appears from reconciliation of conflicting narrations and Qur'ānic verses that the weighing on Plain of Resurrection will take place twice. The first weighing will be to separate the believers from the non-believers. Anyone whose Book of Deeds is put on the scale and contains the belief (*'Īmān*) will be heavy, and the scale of anyone whose Ledger of Deeds does not contain *'Īmān* will be light. At this stage, the believers will be separated from the non-believers. Weighing on the second time will be to distinguish between good and evil deeds of the believers. The reference, in the present Sūrah, is probably to the first weighing in which the scale of every believer will be heavy regardless of his other deeds, while the scale of an unbeliever will be light, even though he might have performed some good acts.

It is explained in Mazḥarī that the Holy Qur'ān generally contrasts the unbelievers and righteous believers, when speaking of retribution [reward or punishment], because the latter are the perfect believers. As for the believers who have performed righteous as well as unrighteous deeds, the Qur'ān is generally silent on the issue. However, the principle may be noted that on the Day of Judgement human deeds will not be counted, but weighed. Fewer good deeds with high degree of faith and sincerity, and in accordance with Sunnah will be heavier than many good deeds - prayers, fasting, charity and pilgrimage with lesser degree of faith and sincerity, or not completely in accordance with Sunnah.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Qāri'ah
Ends here

Sūrah At-Takāthur (Competition in Amassing)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 8 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 8

أَلْهَيْكُمْ التَّكَاثُرُ ﴿١﴾ حَتَّىٰ زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ ﴿٢﴾ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ
 ﴿٣﴾ ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤﴾ كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ ﴿٥﴾
 لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيمَ ﴿٦﴾ ثُمَّ لَتَرَوُنَّهَا عَيْنَ الْيَقِينِ ﴿٧﴾ ثُمَّ لَتُسْأَلُنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ
 عَنِ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٨﴾

You are distracted by mutual competition in amassing (worldly benefits), [1] until you reach the graves. [2] No! (This is not a correct attitude.) You will soon know (the reality). [3] Again, you will soon know. [4] No! if you have had sure knowledge (of the Hereafter, you would not have been so distracted) [5] You will certainly see the Hell, [6] then you will see it with an eye of certainty. [7] Then you will be asked about all the pleasures (you enjoyed in the world). [8]

Special Merit of Sūrah At-Takāthur

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have once asked the noble Companions: "Is there anyone from amongst you who has the strength to recite one thousand verses a day?" The blessed Companions replied: "Who can recite a thousand verses a day?" The Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Can you not recite Sūrah At-Takāthur?" This implies that Sūrah At-Takāthur equals in weight and worth to a thousand verses, thus stressing its great

importance. [Maḏharī with reference to Ḥākim and Baihaqī on the authority of Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه].

Warning Against Materialistic Attitude

Verse [1] **الْهَيْكُمُ النَّكَارُ** (You are distracted by mutual competition in amassing [worldly benefiṭs].) The word *takāthur* is derived from the root *kathrah*, and means 'to amass much wealth'. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه and Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى have assigned this interpretation to it. Qatādah رضي الله عنه says that this word is also used in the sense of 'taking pride in the abundance of material goods'. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ recited this verse and explained its meaning, thus: "Acquiring wealth but not paying out of it the obligatory dues." [Qurṭubī].

Verse [2] **حَتَّىٰ زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ** (until you reach the graves.) Here the words 'reaching the graves' mean 'to die and be buried in the graves', as the following Prophetic Ḥadīth bears testimony to this interpretation. Referring to verse [2] of this Sūrah, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ** "until death overtakes you" [Ibn Kathīr, from by Ibn Abī Ḥātim]. The verse thus implies that many people are engrossed in acquiring worldly goods and racing each other in wealth and children etc. and remain neglectful of the Hereafter till death comes upon them, and then they are seized by the divine punishment. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Shikhkhīr رضي الله عنه reports that one day he visited the Holy Prophet ﷺ while the latter was reciting Sūrah At-Takāthur and was saying:

يقول ابن ادم مالى مالى وهل لك من مالك الا ما اكلت فافنيت اوليست فابلت
او تصدقت فامضيت، وفي رواية لمسلم وما سوى ذلك فذاهب وتاركة للناس.
(ابن كثير، قرطبي بروايت مسلم، ترمذى احمد)

"The Son of 'Ādam says: 'My wealth, my wealth.' But you do not reap any benefit from your wealth except for that which you ate and you finished it, or that which you clothed yourself with and you wore it out, or that which you gave as charity and you have spent it."

And in a narration by Muslim: "Everything else other than that will go away, and he will leave it for other people.(i.e. inheritors)" [Ibn Kathīr and Qurṭubī as transmitted by Muslim, Tirmidhī and Aḥmad].

Imām Bukhārī records from Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه that the Messenger of

Allah ﷻ said:

لو كان لابن آدم وادياً من ذهب لاحتب ان يكون له واديان ولن يملأ فاه الا التراب
و يتوب الله على من تاب.

"If the Son of 'Ādam has a valley of gold, he would love to have two valleys, and nothing but the dust of grave will fill his mouth. And Allah accepts the repentance of him who turns to Him in penitence."

Sayyidnā 'Ubayy Ibn Ka'b رضي الله عنه, referring to the Tradition quoted above, says, "We used to think that this was a part of the Qur'ān until the first verse of Sūrah At-Takāthur was revealed." It seems that the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited the verse and interpreted it in his own words. As a result, some of the Companions were under the impression that the Prophetic words were part of the Qur'ān. Later on, when the Sūrah was recited in its entirety, it did not contain the Prophetic words. This made them realize that the Prophetic words were actually of explanatory nature, and not part of the Qur'ān.

Verse [102:5] كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ (No! if you have had sure knowledge..) The word 'if' requires a principal clause that seems missing here, but the context suggests that the sense is the following: "If you had the sure knowledge of accountability on the Day of Judgement, you would not have engrossed yourselves in mutual competition in acquiring worldly goods and taking pride in their abundance."

Verse [102:7] ثُمَّ لَتَرَوُنَّهَا عَيْنَ الْيَقِينِ (...then you will see it with an eye of certainty.) The phrase '*ain-ul-yaqīn*' (translated above as 'eye of certainty') refers to the certainty attained by physical observation, and this is the highest degree of certainty. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه reports that when Holy Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام was on the mount of Ṭūr, his people started worshipping a calf. Allah informed him about this while he was still on the mountain. This piece of information did not affect Mūsā عليه السلام so much. However, when he returned and saw the Children of Israel, with his own eyes, worshipping the calf, he became so indignant that the tablets of Torah involuntarily fell from his hands. [Transmitted by Aḥmad and Ṭabarāni with an authentic chain of narrators, as quoted by Maḥzarī].

Verse [102:8] ثُمَّ لَتُسْأَلُنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنِ النَّعِيمِ (Then you will be asked about all the pleasures [you enjoyed in the world].) This means that, on the Day of

Judgment, all of you will be questioned whether you had shown gratitude towards Allah's favors, or did you misuse them and were ungrateful to Allah? Some of these favors and bounties are explicitly mentioned elsewhere in the Qur'ān:

إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَٰئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا

(...Surely, the ear, the eye and the heart - each one of them shall be interrogated about.) [17:36]

These organs and their faculties comprehend millions of blessings of Allah, and man will be questioned as to how he used them every moment of his life.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said that first question that will be put by Allah to every person is: "Did I not give you good health, and did I not give you cold water to quench your thirst?" (Tirmidhī, and Ibn Ḥibbān, with rating as *ṣaḥīḥ*, from Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه, as quoted by Ibn Kathīr)

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ is also reported to have said that no man will be able to move from his place unless he answers five questions: [1] How did he spend his life?; [2] In what pursuits did he expend his youthful energy?; [3] How did he earn his wealth - (by lawful means or unlawful means?); [4] Where did he spend his wealth - (in lawful ways or unlawful ways?); and [5] Did he act upon the knowledge Allah gave him? (Bukhārī).

Mujāhid, the leading authority on Tafsīr, says that this question on the Day of Judgement relates to every delight of the world that he enjoyed - whether it is in connection with food, clothes, house, wife, children, kingdom, government or honor. Qurṭubī, having cited this, concludes that this is absolutely true, because the question does not specify any particular blessing.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah At-Takāthur
Ends here

Sūrah Al-‘Aṣr (The Time)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 3 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 3

وَالْعَصْرِ ﴿١﴾ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ ﴿٢﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ ﴿٣﴾

I swear by the Time, [1] man is in a state of loss indeed,
[2] except those who believed and did righteous deeds,
and advised each other for truth, and advised each
other for patience. [3]

Virtue of [Studying] Sūrah al-‘Aṣr

Sayyidnā ‘Ubaidullāh Ibn Hiṣn رحمه الله reports that whenever two Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ met, they would not part company until one of them had recited Sūrah Al-‘Aṣr in its entirety to the other. [Transmitted by At-Ṭabarānī]. Imām Shāfi‘ī says that if people thought about Sūrah Al-‘Aṣr carefully, it would be enough for their guidance. It is a concise but comprehensive Sūrah, which in three verses, outlines a complete way of human life based on the Islamic worldview.

In this Sūrah, Allah swears an oath by the 'Time' and says that mankind is in a state of loss; exception, however, is made of people who are characterized by four qualities: [1] faith; [2] righteous deeds; [3] advising each other for Truth; and [4] advising each other for patience. This is the only path to salvation in this world, as well as in the next world. The Qur’ānic prescription comprises, as we have just seen, of four

elements. The first two of them relate to man's own personal betterment, and the other two relate to other people's guidance and reform. [Ibn Kathīr].

Relationship between 'Time' and 'Human Loss'

The first point we need to analyze here is the relationship between the 'oath of time' and 'its subject' because there needs to be a relationship between an 'oath' and its 'subject'. The commentators, generally, state that all conditions of man, his growth and development, his movements, his actions and morality - all take place within the space of 'Time'. Man will lose the capital of his existence. Hours, days, months, and years of life pass quickly, spiritual and material potentialities decline, and abilities fade. Man is like a person who possesses great capital and, without his permission and will, every day, a portion of that capital is taken away. This is the nature of life in this world; the nature of continual loss. How well this has been put poetically:

حَيَاتُكَ أَنْفَاسٌ تُعَدُّ فَكُلَّمَا.....مَضَى نَفْسٌ مِنْهَا انْتَقَصَتْ بِهِ جُزْءٌ أ

"Your life comprises a few breaths that can be counted; when one of them is sent out, a part of your life has diminished."

Allah has granted man the invaluable capital of his life, so that he may invest it in profitable business venture. If he invests his capital of life sensibly in good works, there will be no limit to the profitable returns; but if he invests it unwisely in evil works, then, let alone attracting profitable returns, he will even lose his capital, and. In addition, he will incur the dreadful scourge of committing numerous sins. If however a person did not invest his life-capital in good deeds or in evil deeds, then he, at least, loses both the profit as well as the capital. This is not merely a poetic imagery, but is supported by a Prophetic Ḥadīth, according to which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said:

كُلٌّ يَغْدُو فَبَاعَ نَفْسَهُ، فَمَعَتْقُهَا أَوْ مُوْبِقُهَا

"When a person wakes up in the morning, he invests his soul or life in a business enterprise: some of the investors free or save the capital from loss and others destroy it."

The Qur'ān itself has used the word *tijārah* in relation to 'faith' and 'righteous deed', thus:

هَلْ أَذِلُّكُمْ عَلَى تِجَارَةٍ تُنْجِيكُمْ مِنْ عَذَابِ إِلِيمٍ

"...shall I tell you about a trade that saves you from a painful punishment? [61:10]"

Since 'Time' is man's capital of life, the man himself is the trader. Under normal circumstances, his capital is not a frozen thing that may be kept for a while and used up later when the need arises. The capital is fluid or flowing all the time, every minute and every second. The man who invests it needs to be very wise, intelligent and agile, so that he is able to swiftly and readily reap the profit from a flowing capital. One of the old scholars said that he had learnt the meaning of this verse from an ice-seller whose trade required utmost diligence, and if he were neglectful for a moment, his entire capital would melt away. That is why this verse has sworn an oath by the 'time' to indicate that it is a melting capital, and the only way to escape loss is to take every moment of his life as valuable, and use it for the four acts mentioned in the Sūrah.

Another possible reason for swearing by 'Time' may be that the 'Time' (in the sense of history) bears testimony to the fact mentioned in the Sūrah. If one thinks on the causes of the rise and decline of individuals and nations, he would certainly believe that it is only these four acts (mentioned in the forthcoming verses) that may ensure the real success and betterment of mankind. Whoever has ever abandoned them has suffered a great loss, as is evident from numerous events recorded by history.

Let us now study the 'four principles' mentioned in the Sūrah. As pointed out earlier, faith and righteous deeds are related to man's moral and spiritual growth and development. They are not in need of elaboration. However, the last two principles ['advising each other for truth'] and ['advising each other for patience'] require some elaboration.

The infinitive *tawāṣī* is derived from *waṣiyyah* which means 'to advise somebody strongly and effectively about the best thing to do in a particular situation'. The term *waṣiyyah* also refers to a 'will or testament' where a testator advises his executor regarding the disposal of his estate on his death.

The two parts are in fact two chapters of the same testament: [1] advice to truth; and [2] advice to patience and fortitude. These two concepts may be explained in different ways. One way to explain them is

that *ḥaqq* ('truth') refers to the package of 'correct faith' and 'good deeds', and *ṣabr* ('patience') refers to abstinence from all sins and evil deeds. Thus the first concept refers to 'enjoining good actions' and the second concept refers to 'forbidding evil actions'. The cumulative sense of the Sūrah is that believers have been enjoined not only to adopt right faith and good deeds themselves, but to advise others strongly and effectively to adopt them, and thus help in the creation of a healthy atmosphere around them.

It is also possible to interpret 'Truth' as referring to articles of faith, and to interpret 'patience' as referring to all good actions and abstinence from evil deeds. The word *ṣabr*, originally meaning 'to withhold oneself and to bind oneself', encompasses binding oneself down to the performance of righteous deeds and abstaining from sins.

Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Taimiyyah has stated in one of his monographs that there are normally two factors that restrain a person from faith and righteous deeds: The first cause is some doubts about the true faith. When such doubts arise in the mind of people, it destroys their faith and leaves them confused and confounded. As a result, it adversely affects their righteous deeds. The second cause is the selfish desires that stop man from doing good, and involve him in evil deeds. In this situation, he theoretically believes that he should do good and abstain from sins, but his selfish desires lead him to stray from the right path. The current verse indicates to remove both causes of one's distraction. By stressing upon 'advice of truth' it has catered to the first cause, and that it should be removed by reforming others on theoretical and academic level, and by emphasizing on 'advice of patience' it has taken care of the second cause by enjoining upon the Muslims to advise others to give up the base desires and remain firm against their evil demands. Put differently, 'enjoining the truth' means 'improving the knowledge of Muslims or their intellectual development' and 'enjoining patience' means 'improving the practical life of Muslims'.

Need to Salvage the Entire Muslim Society

This Sūrah lays down the important principle of guidance for the Muslims that inviting other Muslims to keep to the true faith and good deeds is as much necessary as their own submission to the Holy Qurʾān and Sunnah. Without sincere efforts, to the best of one's ability, to invite

others to the right path, one's own good deeds are not enough to one's salvation. Especially, if a person does not take care of the spiritual and moral welfare of his wife, children and family and turns a blind eye to their unrighteous deeds, he is blocking his way to salvation - no matter how pious he himself might be. Therefore, the Qur'ān and the Sunnah make it obligatory upon every Muslim to do his best to invite others to the good deeds, and warn them against the evil acts. Unfortunately, let alone the general public, many learned people are lax in this matter. They think it is sufficient for them to be concerned about their own moral and spiritual well-being. They are not concerned about the well-being of their family and children. May Allah grant us the ability to act upon this verse.

**Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-‘Aṣr
Ends here**

Sūrah Al-Humazah (The Backbiter)

This Sūrah is Makki, and it has 9 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 9

وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ هُمَزَةٍ لُّمَزَةٍ ﴿١﴾ الَّذِي جَمَعَ مَالًا وَعَدَّدَهُ ﴿٢﴾ يُحَسِّبُ
أَنَّ مَالَهُ أَخْلَدَهُ ﴿٣﴾ كَلَّا لَيُنْبَذَنَّ فِي الْحُطَمَةِ ﴿٤﴾ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا
الْحُطَمَةُ ﴿٥﴾ نَارُ اللَّهِ الْمَوْقُودَةُ ﴿٦﴾ الَّتِي تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْآفِئَةِ ﴿٧﴾ إِنَّهَا
عَلَيْهِمْ مُّؤَصَّدَةٌ ﴿٨﴾ فِي عَمَدٍ مُمَدَّدَةٍ ﴿٩﴾

Woe to every backbiter, derider [1] who accumulates wealth and counts it. [2] He thinks that his wealth has made him eternal. [3] Never! He will certainly be thrown into the Crusher. [4] And what may let you know what the Crusher is? [5] It is Allah's kindled fire, [6] that will peep into the hearts. [7] It will be closed on them, [8] in outstretched columns. [9]

Warning against dreadful end of those committing three obnoxious sins

This Sūrah warns of the severe punishment on three grave sins, and then highlights the nature of that severe punishment. The three sins are backbiting, deriding and selfish hoarding of wealth. The words *hamz* and *lamz* are used in several senses. Most commentators agree that the word *hamz*, from which is derived the word *humazah*, means to 'backbite', that is, to speak ill of a person behind his back. The word *lamz*, from which is

derived the word *lumazah*, means to 'slander' or 'to deride', that is, to speak ill of a person to his face. Both these sins are morally and socially obnoxious and deadly. The Qur'ān and the Sunnah have sounded a stern warning against these sins. However, 'backbiting' is, from one perspective, worse than 'slander'. 'Backbiting' is worse because the ill of a person is spoken behind his back; the victim is not present to defend himself and put an end to it; thus the sin continues to be committed to a greater and increasing degree. 'Slander', on the other hand, though an obnoxious sin in itself, is relatively less in degree than backbiting, because the victim is present to defend himself and put an end to face-to-face insulting or fault-finding with him. From another perspective 'slander' is worse than 'backbiting', because to speak ill of a person to his face is tantamount to insulting him and denigrating him. This is morally and socially more harmful and hurting, and therefore its punishment is more dreadful. According to a *Ḥadīth*, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said,

شَرَّ أَعْبَادِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى الْمَشَاءُونَ بِالنَّمِيمَةِ الْمَفْرُقُونَ بَيْنَ الْأَحِبَّةِ الْبَاغُونَ الْبِرَاءَ الْعِنْتَ

"The worst servants of Allah are those who speak ill of someone, creating enmity between friends and finding fault with innocent people."

The third evil quality denounced severely in this Sūrah is greed, that is, the selfish hoarding of wealth, against which is the stern warning of the dreadful end of those who have passion for worldly riches. This verse, however, refers to the love of, and passion for, wealth which is accumulated and counted over and over again. Other verses and *Aḥādīth* bear testimony to the fact that amassing of wealth in principle is not prohibited or sinful. Therefore, verse [2] must be interpreted in the light of those verses and traditions. This verse purports to say that anyone who accumulates wealth and does not pay his obligatory dues or has greed for wealth that leads him to pride and arrogance, or has love of wealth that engrosses him in the hoarding of wealth so profoundly that he forgets his religious obligations, his practice is condemned in the strongest terms, and a person attaching such profound love, greed and passion for material riches will suffer eternal perdition as described in the verses that follow.

Verse [104:7] تَطَّلُعُ عَلَى الْأُنْفُسِ (that will peep into the hearts). In other words, the fire of Hell will reach their hearts. The basic property of fire is to burn every particle of the things that fall into it. When people are put

into the Hell-fire, it will devour every limb and organ of the body until it reaches their heart, but the person will not die. This characteristic of the Hell-fire is especially highlighted in the verse because the fire of this world kills the person even before reaching the heart. The fire of the Hell, on the other hand, will reach the heart in the state of life, and man will experience the torture of the burning of the heart while alive.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Humazah
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Fīl

(The Elephant)

This Sūrah is Makki, and it has 5 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 5

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِأَصْحَابِ الْفِيلِ ﴿١﴾ أَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ كَيْدَهُمْ فِي
تَضْلِيلٍ ﴿٢﴾ وَأَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا أَبَابِيلَ ﴿٣﴾ تَرْمِيهِمْ بِحِجَارَةٍ مِّنْ
سِجِّيلٍ ﴿٤﴾ فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصْفٍ مَّأْكُولٍ ﴿٥﴾

Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the People of the Elephant? [1] Has He not turned their plan into nullity? [2] And He sent upon them flying birds in flocks, [3] throwing upon them stones of baked clay, [4] and thus He turned them into an eaten-up chaff. [5]

Commentary

The subject-matter of the Sūrah

This Sūrah refers to the story of the People of the Elephants who came with an army of elephants for the purpose of destroying the House of Allah in (The Holy Ka'bah) in Makkah. But their plan backfired and the Divine scourge overtook them. Allah destroyed the army with a flock of ordinary birds. Thus their plans were foiled and thwarted.

When did the event take place?

This event took place in the very year in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ was born at Makkah, according to some traditions and the popular view among the historians. [Ibn Kathīr]. The scholars of *ḥadīth* have taken this

event as a special type of *mu'jizah* (miracle) of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but the term *mu'jizah*, in its real sense, refers to an abnormal event shown by Allah to prove the claim of a prophet to having been sent by Him. Therefore, a *mu'jizah* is shown after a prophet's Divine commission. However, sometimes it happens that a miraculous event takes place before a prophet's claim to prophet-hood. This, in the parlance of the scholars of *ḥadīth*, is called *irhāṣ* which means 'prologue or introduction'. The word *rahṣ* means a 'foundation stone' [Qāmūs]. As the miraculous events taking place before the advent of prophets or before their claim to prophet-hood are meant to introduce and affirm that soon a particular prophet will be Divinely commissioned, they are referred to as *irhāṣ*. Many miraculous incidents of this nature [*irhāṣāt*] occurred before the birth and the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and one of them was the incident of the 'People of the Elephants' who were miraculously prevented by the Heavenly scourge from destroying the House of Allah.

Story of the People of the Elephants

Ibn Kathīr, the leading authority on Prophetic Tradition and history, recounts the story as follows: Yemen was under the control of the rulers of Ḥimyar. They were idolaters. Their last king was Dhū Nuwās, an idolater himself, was the enemy of the righteous Christians of his time, who believed in and worshipped One Allah. He persecuted the believers, who were opposed to idol-worship, by burning them alive. Most scholars agree that he killed, in cold blood, by throwing about 20 000 sincere and righteous Christians in his city into a large fire pit, burning them alive in an effort to get them to give up their sincere religion. This is the story of the 'People of Fire-Pit' referred to in [85:4-7]. Two men somehow managed to escape from him. They fled to Syria and took refuge with Caesar, who was himself a Christian and the emperor of Syria. They requested the emperor to avenge this cruel act of Dhū Nuwās. Caesar wrote to Najāshi (Negus), the king of Abyssinia [now Ethiopia], who was closer to the home of the man. Najāshi sent two governors with him: Arbāt and Abrahah, along with a huge army.

The army invaded Yemen and freed the whole country from the possession of Ḥimyar. Dhū Nuwās tried to escape, but was drowned in the sea and died. Yemen thus became part of the Abyssinian dominion and Abrahah was appointed its viceroy. However, he and Arbāt fought

each other until Arbāṭ was eventually killed and Abrahah emerged victorious. The latter was appointed the commander of the Abyssinian army in Yemen, and the governor of that region. Having captured Yemen, he built a superbly luxurious cathedral in his area. The purpose was to attract the people of Yemen to make pilgrimage to this cathedral instead of *Ka'bah* in Makkah. It was huge and tall so that a person standing at the bottom was not able to see the top. He decorated the structure with gold, silver and other precious gems. In short, he meant it to be an architectural masterpiece, second to none or unsurpassed in the world, to be revered by all and sundry and divert pilgrims from the Sacred Mosque in Makkah to his cathedral in Yemen. He did this after he had witnessed the love and enthusiasm of the Yemeni Arabs - which were the same as those felt all over the Arabia - for the *Ka'bah*, with the aim of making them forsake their attachment to the Mosque of Makkah and turn instead to his new luxurious cathedral. Thus he proclaimed throughout his kingdom that no one should ever visit the *Ka'bah* in Makkah, and that the pilgrimage should from now on take place to his so-called '*Ka'bah*' in Yemen.

Although the Arabs were idol-worshippers, the love and reverence for the religion of Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ and the *Ka'bah* had permeated their hearts. As a result, the 'Andān, Qaḥṭān and Quraish tribes were enraged and infuriated by this proclamation. One night, someone entered the church and defecated in it. According to other narratives, a nomadic tribe halted near the church and started a fire for their own needs. The wind on that day was blowing violently and the cathedral caught on fire and sustained much loss. When Abrahah came to know about it, and learnt that a Quraishi had done this, he swore to march to the House of Makkah and destroy it stone by stone. Thus he prepared himself and set out with a huge and powerful army, so that none might prevent him from carrying out his mission. He asked for Najāshī's permission. He permitted him and sent for him, particularly for this expedition, a special elephant whose name was Maḥmūd. It was unusually huge in size and powerful in strength the like of which had never been seen before. The king of Abyssinia sent in eight more elephants as reinforcements for the army. Their intention was to use this extraordinary elephant to demolish the *Ka'bah*. They planned to do this by fastening chains to the pillars of the

Ka'bah and placing the other ends around the neck of the elephant. Then they would make the elephant pull on them in order to tear down the walls of the *Ka'bah* [God forbid!] all at once. When the Arabs heard of Abrahah's expedition, they considered it their moral obligation to defend the Sacred House and thwart the evil plans of the conspirators. Thus, the Arabs raised a large army under the command of Dhū Nafr, a Yamenite Arab. He called the Arabs to go to war against Abrahah and fight in defense of the Sacred House, so that the enemy is unable to tear it down. The people responded to him readily and entered into battle with the enemy, but he defeated them. This was due to Allah's will that no humans should protect His House and His intent to expose the enemy to embarrassment and venerate the Sacred Sanctuary to the highest degree. Dhū Nafr was captured and taken prisoner.

The army continued on its way until it came to the settlement of the Banū Khath'am tribe. Their leader, Nufail Ibn Ḥabīb, led his entire tribe against the army, but they too were defeated and Nufail was taken prisoner. Abrahah at first decided to kill him, but at second thought he forgave him and took him as his guide to show him the way to Ḥijāz.

When the army approached Ṭā'if, the people of Thaḳīf went out to Abrahah. They wanted to pacify him, because they had heard about the fate of those who had resisted him previously. Also, they were afraid that he would demolish their temple consecrated in the name of their idol Al-Lāt. Therefore, they did not resist him on the understanding that he would not touch the idol of Lāt. He was compassionate to them, and they sent a guide with him by the name of Abū Righāl. When they arrived in a place called Al-Maghmas, near Makkah, they settled there. This was the pasture where the camels of the Quraish grazed. Abrahah sent his troops on a foray to capture the camels and other grazing animals of the Makkans. They accomplished their mission. They also drove away about two hundred camels of 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib, grandfather of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and the leader of the Quraish. Abrahah then sent an emissary named Ḥanāṭah Al-Ḥimyari to enter Makkah and bring to him the leader of the Quraish. He mandated him to convey to the leader of the Quraish his message that the king did not come to fight with the Makkans unless they stood in his way of destroying their Sacred Sanctuary. Arriving in the city, Ḥanāṭah was directed to 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib

Ibn Hāshim, to whom he communicated Abrahah's message. According to Ibn Ishāq's narration, 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib replied: "By Allah! We too have no desire to fight him, nor do we have the might to do so. This is the Sacred Sanctuary of Allah built by His friend Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. If He wills to prevent Abrahah from pulling it down, He will protect it. And if He allows him to approach it, by Allah, we have no means to defend it." So Ḥanāṭah told him: "Come with me to Abrahah." So 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib went with him.

When Abrahah saw him, he was highly impressed, because 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib had the most handsome, charming and attractive personality. He descended from his throne and sat with the latter on a carpet on the ground. He then said to his interpreter to ask him: "What do you need?" 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib replied to the interpreter: "I want the king to give back my two hundred camels which his soldiers have taken from me." Then Abrahah told his interpreter to relay to him: "When I first set my eyes on you, I admired you greatly and had great respect for you. But all that is now lost. You speak only of your two hundred camels while you fully well know that I have come to tear down your *Ka'bah* which is the embodiment of your religion and the religion of your forefathers. You did not even say a single word to persuade me to spare it." 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib calmly responded: "I am the owner of my camels and am concerned about them. I am not the owner of Allah's House. The Master of the House knows how best to protect His House." Abrahah rudely rebuffed: "Your God cannot protect it from me." 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib made a rejoinder: "Then do as you like or [take your chance!]" According to other narratives, there were other chiefs of Quraish with 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib at the time of this negotiation. They proposed to Abrahah that if he withdrew from the Sanctuary, the entire region of Tihamah would pay him a third of their agricultural produce annually as tribute. But he turned down the offer. He then gave back 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib's camels to him. 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib took his camels and went back home, ordering his people to leave Makkah and seek shelter at the top of the mountains. He feared that atrocities might be committed by the army against them. Then he went with a few figures of the Quraish to the Sacred Sanctuary. He held the metal ring of the door of *Ka'bah* and prayed Allah to give them victory over Abrahah and his army. While hanging on to the ring of the *Ka'bah*'s door, he earnestly

implored: "We have no strength to face the army of Abrahah. So, O my Lord! Defend Your *Ka'bah*." Having so prayed in all earnestness, 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib led all the Makkans to the neighbouring mountains, because they were convinced that Allah's scourge would overtake Abrahah and his troops. This is the reason why they spoke to Abrahah about their camels, and not about the House of Allah.

When the next morning dawned, Abrahah prepared to enter the sacred city of Makkah. He prepared the elephant named Maḥmūd and mobilized his army, and they turned the elephant towards the *Ka'bah*. At that moment Nufail Ibn Ḥabīb, whom Abrahah had captured earlier, approached it and stood next to it, and taking it by its ear, he said: "Return safely where you came from, because you are, verily, in the Sacred City of Allah." Then he released the elephant's ear and it knelt and sat down forthwith. The elephant drivers exerted all efforts to persuade the elephant to enter the City, but their efforts were in vain. Then they tried striking it with large iron spears and putting iron arrowheads in its trunk. They beat it on its head with axes and used hooked staffs to pull it out of its resistance and make it stand, but it refused. So they turned it towards Yemen, and it rose and walked quickly. Then they turned it towards Syria, it walked fast. Then they turned it towards the east and it walked briskly. Then they turned it towards Makkah, it knelt and sat down again .

This was one aspect of the manifestation of the Divine power unfolding itself miraculously. On the other hand, some flocks of birds were seen coming from the sea. Each bird carried three pebbles of the size of gram seeds or lentils, one in each claw and two in its beak. According to Wāqidi's narration, the birds looked unusual which were never seen before. They looked smaller than pigeons, and their claws were red in colour. They flew over Abrahah's army and pelted them with the pebbles. Each pebble was more devastating than the bullet of a revolver . When it fell on anything, it tore directly through the body and settled deep in the ground. Seeing this scourge, the elephants fled in panic, except one which was harmed and destroyed by the pebble. Not all of Abrahah's men were destroyed instantly. People escaped in different directions. They died excruciatingly on their way back. As Allah had willed that the most distressful scourge should be inflicted upon Abrahah, He did not allow

him to die immediately. In fact, Allah afflicted him with a deadly disease. A kind of poison spread thoroughly through his entire body and caused every single part to decay - his limbs began to rot and separate from the rest of his body and he started losing one finger after another. His body was carried back in that state to Yemen. By the time they arrived back in Ṣan'ā', the capital of Yemen, his body was broken down limb by limb until he eventually died. Two of Maḥmūd's (name of elephant) drivers remained in Makkah, but both of them became blind and paralyzed. Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq reports that Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها narrates that she saw them blind and paralyzed. Her sister, Sayyidah Asmā' رضي الله عنها, says that she saw the two blind and paralyzed men begging. The 'People of the Elephants' is a momentous event in Arab history, which was witnessed by hundreds of Arabs. It is to this well-known historical incident that this Sūrah refers.

Lexical Analysis

Verse [105:1] أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِأَصْحَابِ الْفِيلِ (Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the people of the Elephant?) In the phrase *alam tara* [have you not seen], the second person pronoun refers to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It is interesting to note that the event took place before the blessed birth of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He could not have seen or witnessed it with his own eyes. However, the incident was so widely known as if the Prophet ﷺ had seen it with his own eyes, which is a sign of the certainty of its happening. Such a knowledge is described by the word *ru'yat* [seeing]. As reported earlier, Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها and her sister, Sayyidah Asmā' رضي الله عنها, both say that they had seen the two camel drivers had become blind and paralyzed and used to go around begging. In this way, the traces of this event were seen even after the birth of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

Verse [105:3] طَيْرًا أَبَابِيلَ (... birds in flocks.) The word *abābīl* is plural and is said to have no singular. It means birds in flocks, or swarms of birds. It is not the name of a particular bird. In Urdu usually *abābīl* refers to 'swallows', they are not implied in the verse as indicated in the above narration. These birds were somewhat smaller in size than pigeon and they were birds that were never seen before. [Sa'īd Ibn Jubair, as quoted by Qurtubī].

Verse [105:4] بِحِجَارَةٍ مِّنْ سِجِّيلٍ (...stones of baked clay.) The word *sijjīl* is a

compound Persian word, Arabicized, made up of two Persian words: *sang* [stone] and *gil* [clay]. They refer to ordinary or common clay rolled into little balls and then baked to harden. These pebbles are not heavy or hard like rocks chipped off mountains. They in themselves did not have any devastating power, but it was Allah who created in these stones the high capability of explosion and blowing-up even more than the bullets of a revolver.

Verse [105:5] فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصْفٍ مَّأْكُولٍ (And thus He turned them into an eaten-up chaff .) The word '*aṣf*' means 'chaff, straw, husk or bran'. Usually the '*aṣf*' is scattered and when it is eaten or devoured by animals, it does not remain in the same state. This is what happened to Abrahah and his army .

Conclusion

The miraculous event of the 'People of the Elephant' enhanced in the hearts of the entire Arabian society the love, respect and honor of the Quraish. When Arabia witnessed that Allah has, on their behalf, miraculously destroyed their enemy, they were convinced that the Quraish are men of God, and custodians of the Sacred House of Allah [Qurṭubī]. That is why they were respected and protected wherever they went; although other caravans in Arabia had to fear attacks from highway robbers, the Quraish travelled untouched and enjoyed high social status. As a result, they could freely and safely carry out their commercial activities in the neighboring states, and enjoy economic prosperity. The Sūrah that follows refers to these journeys and invites the Quraish to be thankful to Allah and worship Him alone for providing them with all of their needs.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Fīl
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Quraish

(The Quraish)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 4 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 4

لَا يَلْفِ قُرَيْشٌ ﴿١﴾ إِلَّا فِيهِمْ رِحْلَةَ الشِّتَاءِ وَالصَّيْفِ ﴿٢﴾ فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ
هَذَا الْبَيْتِ ﴿٣﴾ الَّذِي أَطْعَمَهُمْ مِنْ جُوعٍ ۖ وَآمَنَهُمْ مِنْ خَوْفٍ ﴿٤﴾

Because of the familiarity of the Quraish, [1] that is, their familiarity with the trips of winter and summer, [2] they must worship the Lord of this House, [3] who gave them food against hunger, and gave them security against fear. [4]

Commentary

The Subject-matter of Sūrah Al-Fīl and Sūrah Al-Quraish

All commentators concur that the subject-matter of the two Sūrahs is so closely related that in some of the copies of the Qur'ān they had been written as a single Sūrah without the insertion of *bismillah* between them. But when Sayyidnā 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه compiled a standard copy of the Holy Qur'ān with the consensus of all the companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, he separated these two Sūrahs and inserted *bismillah* between them, and the two Sūrahs.

Lexical Analysis

لَا يَلْفِ قُرَيْشٌ (Because of the familiarity of the Quraish 106:1). The particle *li* is a preposition. According to the rules of Arabic grammar, it should be linked with another sentence. What is that sentence here? In answer to this question, different possibilities are highlighted by the exegetes.

Keeping in view the close relation of the present Sūrah with the previous one, some of them have held that the following sentence should be taken as understood here: *أَنَا أَهْلَكْنَا أَصْحَابَ الْفِيلِ* "We [Allah] destroyed the 'people of the elephant' so that the Quraish, who were familiar with two commercial trips during winter and summer, may not have any obstacle in their trips, and by this trading activity they might develop a certain prestige for them and respect them." A second school of interpreters has taken the following sentence as understood: *اعجبوا* (One should wonder on the Quraish undertaking winter and summer journeys freely and safely.) A third school of interpreters says that this is the *lam* of *ta'lil* and it is syntactically related to the sentence that follows it *فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ* (they must worship the Lord of this House.) The Sūrah draws attention to the fact that the Quraish used to make two trade-journeys - one in winter to Yemen and another in summer to Syria. These trade-journeys made them wealthy and affluent. This was possible because Allah annihilated their enemies, the people of the elephant, in an exemplary way and created in the hearts of the people an awe and reverence for them. People held them in high esteem, respect and honor in all the territories where they went.

Superiority of Quraish

This Sūrah indicates that Quraish, of all the tribes of Arabia, was most acceptable in the sight of Allah. The Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said: "Verily, Allah selected Kinānah from the offspring of Prophet Ismā'īl عليه السلام and selected Quraish from the progeny of Kinānah. From the Quraish, Allah selected Banū Hāshim and from Banū Hāshim He selected me." [Baghawī on the authority of Wāthilah Ibn Asqa]. Another Tradition reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "People will follow Quraish in matters of good as well as in matters of evil." [Muslim on the authority of Jābir, as quoted by Maḥzarī]. The reason for the selection of the tribes mentioned in the first Tradition is presumably on account of their special abilities, innate capacities and natural endowments. Even in the days of paganism and ignorance, when people practiced *kufr* and *shirk*, their morals and inborn abilities were of a very high standard. They had the perfect capacity to accept the truth. This is the reason why most of the blessed Companions and Friends of Allah were Quraishites. [Mazhari]

Verse [106:2] *رِحْلَةَ الْشِتَاءِ وَالصَّيْفِ* (...their familiarity with the trips of winter and summer.) It is a known fact that Makkah is situated in an utterly bleak and arid valley where no agricultural produce grows, nor are there any orchards where the people of Makkah could reap any kind

of fruits. Therefore, the founder of the House of Allah, Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm Khalīl-ullah ﷺ, prayed to Allah at the time of founding the city, thus: [2:126] رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا الْبَلَدَ آمِنًا وَارْزُقْ أَهْلَهُ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ (My Lord, make this a city of peace, and provide its people with fruits) and this fact is mentioned in [28:57], thus: يُجْبَىٰ إِلَيْهِ ثَمَرَاتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ (to which the fruits of everything are drawn)". The Quraish thus needed to make these commercial trips out of Makkah into the neighboring territories to bring the necessities of life to their city. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه reports that the people of Makkah were in a state of abject poverty and Hāshim, the great grandfather of the Prophet ﷺ, exhorted the Quraish to undertake the trading caravans to the neighboring territories. As Syria was a cold region, they went there in summer; and Yemen had a warm climate, so they went there in winter to carry out their commercial activities. They, after their commercial ventures that brought to them great profits and gains, would return to their city safely due to the respect that the people had for them, because they were the keepers and custodians of Allah's sanctuary. Therefore, whoever knew them would honor them. Even those who came to them and traveled with them, would be safe because of them. Hashim was the leader of the Quraish and maintained the economic principle to distribute among the rich and the poor members of the Quraish the gains and the profits made in their business. As a result, even the poor people lived like the wealthy people. Furthermore, an additional Divine favor was granted to them: Allah spared them the trouble of making these annual trips, in that the areas adjacent to Makkah such as Yemen, Tabālah and Ḥarsh were made fertile, fecund and productive where corns, food grains and other agricultural produce grew abundantly - even more than their need. As a result, they had to carry these agricultural produce to Jeddah where they sold them. Thus most of the necessities were available in Jeddah. The people of Makkah, instead of undertaking the two long journeys, went to Jeddah, merely two stations away, to bring their necessities of life. In the current verse, Allah mentions His favor upon them.

Verse [106:3] فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ (they must worship the Lord of this House.) Having mentioned the Divine favors, the Quraish are especially enjoined to express their gratitude to 'the Lord of this House'. Here, out of many attributes of Allah, 'the Lord of this House' is singled out, because it was this House that became the source and fountain of all blessings for them.

Verse [106:4] الَّذِي أَطْعَمَهُمْ مِنْ جُوعٍ وَآمَنَهُمْ مِنْ خَوْفٍ (Who gave them food against hunger, and gave them security against fear.) The verse comprehensively captures all that was needed for the Quraish to live

happily and peacefully in the world. The first phrase أَطْعَمَهُمْ مِنْ جُوعٍ (Who gave them food against hunger) implies that they were provided all year round with every kind of fruit and food. The security referred to in the second phrase أَمْنَهُمْ مِنْ خَوْفٍ (and gave them security against fear) includes security from enemies and robbers (who, out of their respect to them as guardians of Ka'bah, spared them from their attacks), and it also includes security from the punishment in the Hereafter (for those who fulfilled the necessary conditions of faith).

Special Note

Ibn Kathīr says that whoever worships Allah according to the command given in this verse, Allah will give him safety, not only in this world, but also security from punishment in the Hereafter. And whoever deviates from this command, He will deprive him of both types of safety and security as exemplified in the following verse [16:112] :

ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا قَرْيَةً كَانَتْ آمِنَةً مُطْمَئِنَّةً يَأْتِيهَا رِزْقُهَا رَغَدًا مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ فَكَفَرَتْ بِأَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ فَأَذَاقَهَا اللَّهُ لِبَاسَ الْجُوعِ وَالْخَوْفِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾

(And Allah has given an example that there was a town, secure and satisfied, with its sustenance coming in plenty from every place. Then, it turned ungrateful to the bounties of Allah; so, Allah made it taste hunger and terror [cast over it] like a garment in return of what its people used to do. [16:112])

A Great Benefit

Abul Ḥasan Qazwīnī has stated that anyone who fears his enemy or an affliction, should recite Sūrah Al-Quraish. It will give him security from fear and calamity. This is cited by Imām Jazrī and he says that this Sūrah has been tried and tested successfully for this purpose. Qāḍī Thanā'ullah Pānī Patti رحمه الله تعالى cites this in his Tafsīr Maḥzarī and says that his Shaikh Mirzā Maḥzar Jān-i-Jānān instructed him to recite this Sūrah at the time of fear and danger, and said its recitation has been tested and tried to avert all kinds of calamities and afflictions. Qāḍī Thanā'ullah says that he has experienced it several times.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Quraish
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Mā'un

(The Small Gifts)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 7 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 7

أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالْإِيمَانِ ﴿١﴾ فَذَلِكَ الَّذِي يَدْعُ الْيَتِيمَ ﴿٢﴾ وَلَا
يَحُضُّ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمُسْكِينِ ﴿٣﴾ فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ ﴿٤﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ
عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ ﴿٥﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَاءُونَ ﴿٦﴾ وَيَمْنَعُونَ
الْمَاعُونَ ﴿٧﴾

Have you seen him who denies the Requital? [1] So he is the same one who pushes away the orphan. [2] and does not persuade (others) to feed the needy. [3] So, woe to those performers of *ṣalāh*, [4] who are neglectful of their *ṣalāh*, [5] who (do good only to) show off, [6] and refuse (to give even) small gifts. [7]


The love of the world causes nations to lose faith and consign Allah to oblivion

This Sūrah denounces some of the evil actions of the pagans and the hypocrites, and it holds out a threat of destruction to those who commit them. If these evil actions are committed by believers, who do not reject the true faith, they are still heinous and gravely sinful, but the threat of chastisement made in this sūrah does not apply to them. Therefore, verse [107:1] أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالْإِيمَانِ (Have you not seen him who denies the Requital?), as a preamble, makes plain that the person who performs

these evil deeds is one who cries lies to the Doom, and thus the warning of punishment mentioned in this Sūrah is for those who deny the religion and the Day of Judgement. The verse contains a subtle indication that the moral sins condemned in this Sūrah are far too inconceivable from a believer; only a non-believer or hypocrite would commit them. The morally bad and sinful deeds mentioned here are: [1] oppressing and insulting the orphan, and being unkind to them; [2] despite the means, failing to feed the poor or failing to urge others to feed them; [3] praying [in public only, not in private] only to show the people; and [4] failing to pay the Zakāh [obligatory alms]. These actions are intrinsically bad and gravely sinful, but their commission in the wake of *kufr* [disbelief] and *takdhīb* [rejection] are even more aggravating, because they attract eternal perdition, which in this Sūrah is described as *wail* [heavy affliction or calamity or disaster or destruction].

Verses [107:4-6]. *فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ. الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ. الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَاءُونَ.* (So woe to those performers of *ṣalāh* who are neglectful of their *ṣalāh*, who [do good only to] show off.) These verses describe the characteristics of the hypocrites who used to perform the prayers only to make a display of them to the people and prove that their claim of being sincere Muslims is true. As they do not believe in the obligatory nature of the prayers, they are not regular at them, and they do not observe the prescribed times, but offer them carelessly at the eleventh hour or completely out of time. They perform them only when they must to make a display of them, otherwise they have no place in their lives. The preposition 'an (translated above as 'of) in the prepositional phrase *عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ* "[neglectful] of their *ṣalāh*" is significant. It indicates that they [the hypocrites] are neglectful of the very concept of *ṣalāh*. This does not refer to the unintentional errors, slips and mistakes that Muslims make in their prayers. The Holy Prophet ﷺ also made this type of unintentional mistakes in his prayers. The warning of Hell by the expression of wail does not apply to such mistakes. If that was the case, the prepositional phrase would have been *fi salatihim* [in their prayers] instead of [*an Ṣalatihim* [neglectful of their prayers].

Verse [107:7] *وَيَمْنَعُونَ الْمَاعُونَ* (And refuse [to give even] small gifts.) The word *mā'un* literally means 'any small or petty thing' and idiomatically it refers to 'small household articles of common use such as axe, hoe, cooking pot which at the time of need neighbors borrow from one another'.

Anyone who is unwilling to lend such small items is morally a very miserly and mean person. However, in the current verse the word *mā'ūn* is taken in the sense of *Zakāh* [obligatory alms] because it is a little amount out of much wealth - only 2½% out of the entire wealth. Majority of the commentators - like Sayyidnā 'Alī, Ibn 'Umar, Ḥasan Baṣrī, Qatādah, Ḍaḥḥāk  and others - hold the view that *mā'ūn* implies *Zakāh*. [Maḏharī]. The threat of *wail* (torment of Hell) can only be for failure to fulfil one's legal obligation. Giving small items to help out one's fellow human beings is a humanitarian and philanthropic gesture that carries much reward in the Hereafter, but it is not an obligation at all, the violation of which could lead to eternal perdition. Traditions reporting that *mā'ūn* refers to pots and pans, and other household items of daily use are to show that if a person is reluctant to part with such small items, how will he have the heart to part with 2½% of his wealth? The Traditions purport to say that these people are so narrow-minded that they are not willing to make the least bit of selfless sacrifice for the welfare and well-being of others. They are morally mean, low and miserly in the extreme. Therefore, they do not pay their legal alms. Thus the threat of punishment in Hell-fire is not on account of failure to do one's neighborly acts of kindness, but for failure to pay the legal alms and perhaps for their extreme niggardliness.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Mā'ūn
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Kauthar

(The Kauthar)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 3 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 3

إِنَّا أَعْطَيْنَكَ الْكَوْثَرَ ﴿١﴾ فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَانْحَرْ ﴿٢﴾ إِنَّ شَانِكَ
هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ ﴿٣﴾

(O Prophet,) surely We have given to you Al-Kauthar (a river in Paradize). [1] So, offer *ṣalāh* (prayer) to your Lord, and sacrifice. [2] Surely it is your enemy whose traces are cut off. [3]

Cause of Revelation

It is reported by Ibn Abī Ḥatīm, on the authority of Suddī, and by Baihaqī, in *Dalā'il-un- Nubuwwah*, on the authority of Muḥammad Ibn 'Alī Ibn Ḥusain, that the Arabs used to taunt and revile people who have lost their male issues. They used to refer to such a person as '*abtar*', meaning 'having no male offspring or no male issue'. In keeping with this social evil, when the young son of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, namely Qāsim passed away, some leaders of Quraish, especially 'Aṣ Ibn Wa'il, started taunting the Holy Prophet ﷺ telling the people that they no longer need to bother about him, because he had no sons to carry on his name and that he would be forgotten after his death; he is '*abtar*', that is, his lineage is cut off. On this occasion, the Sūrah was revealed. [Baghawī, Ibn Kathīr, Maḥzarī].

According to some narratives, Ka'b Ibn Ashraf, a Jew of Madīnah,

came to Makkah and the Quraish asked him: "You are the leader of the people. What do you think about this young man who claims that he is better than us (in religion), while we are the people who serve the pilgrims; we are the custodians of Ka'bah and supply water to the pilgrims." He replied: "You are better than him." This Sūrah was revealed on that occasion. [Ibn Kathīr cites this incident from Bazzār with an authentic chain of narrators; and Mazharī says that Muslim also transmitted the incident].

According to these narrations, this Sūrah was sent down when the unbelievers of Makkah taunted the Holy Prophet ﷺ because he had lost all his male issues, and called him 'abtar' or insulted him for some other reason. The present Sūrah gives an answer to the taunts of the unbelievers, and maintains that there is no justification for calling the Holy Prophet ﷺ an 'abtar' only because he had no male child alive, not only because his lineal offspring will remain till the Day of Judgment, though from his daughters, but he was destined to be the spiritual father of a multitude of sons in all ages to the end of time, sons who were to be far more faithful, obedient and loving than the sons of any father, and they will outnumber the followers of all the Prophets that came before him. The Sūrah has also dismissed the statement of Ka'b Ibn Ashraf, and highlights the great honor and respect given to him by Allah.

The River or Fountain of Kauthar

Verse [108:1] إِنَّا أَعْطَيْنَكَ الْكَوْثَرَ ([O Prophet,] surely, We have given you Al-Kauthar [a river in Paradise].) The word 'Al-Kauthar' literally means 'abundant goodness'. Imām Bukhārī has recorded on the authority of Sa'īd Ibn Jubair ؓ that Ibn 'Abbās ؓ said about 'al-Kauthar': 'It is the abundant goodness that Allah gave to him [Holy Prophet ﷺ]'. A special pupil of Ibn 'Abbās ؓ said: "I asked Sa'īd Ibn Jubair ؓ that people claim that it is a river in Paradise." Sa'īd Ibn Jubair ؓ replied that the river in Paradise is part of the goodness that Allah gave him. Therefore, Mujāhid interprets that it is the abundant goodness of this world, as well as of the next world. This explanation includes the river in Paradise and other things as well.

The following Ḥadīth is recorded in Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd and Nasa'ī from Sayyidnā Anas ؓ that he said:

بيننا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بين أظهرنا في المسجد إذ اغفى اغفاءة، ثم

رفع رأسه متبسِّمًا. قلنا: ما أضحكك يا رسول الله؟ قال: لقد أنزلت عليّ أنفا سورة فقرأ بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم أنا أعطيتك الكوثر الخ ثم قال: اتدرون ما الكوثر؟ قلنا: الله ورسوله أعلم، قال: فأنه نهرٌ وعدنيهِ ربِّي عز وجل عليه خير كثير، وهو حوض ترد عليه امتي يوم القيامة، أنيته عدد نجوم في السماء، فيحتلج العبد منهم، فاقول ربّ أنه من امتي فيقول: أنك لا تدري ما أحدث بعدك.

"While we were with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in the mosque, he went into some kind of slumber or doze. Then he lifted his head smiling. We asked : 'O Messenger of Allah! What has caused you to smile?' He replied: 'A Sūrah has just been revealed to me.' Then he recited Bismillah and Sūrah Al-Kauthar. Then he asked: 'Do you know what is Al-Kauthar?' We replied: 'Allah and His Messenger know best,' He said: 'It is a river that my Lord, the Mighty and Majestic, has promised me and it has abundant goodness. It is a fountain where my Ummah will come on the Day of Judgement. Its containers are as numerous as the stars in the sky. Then a servant of Allah from among them will be prevented from it, and I will say: 'O Lord! Verily, he is from my Ummah [followers.] ' Then Allah will say: 'You do not know what he introduced [or innovated] after you.'"

This is the wording of Muslim. Ibn Kathīr, having cited this Tradition, writes further:

وقد ورد في صفة الحوض يوم القيمة أنّه يشخب فيه ميزابان من السماء من نهر الكوثر وان أنيته عدد نجوم السماء.

"It is reported regarding the description of the fountain on the Day of Judgement that two channels will lead from the sky to supply the fountain with the water of Kauthar. It will have more cups than the stars in the sky."

The Tradition cited above clarifies many points.

- [1] It indicates the cause of the revelation of Sūrah Al-Kauthar.
- [2] It gives its authentic interpretation, that is, 'abundant goodness' and that it includes the fountain of Kauthar which will quench the thirst of the Prophet's ﷺ followers on the Day of Judgement.
- [3] The actual river of Kauthar is in Paradise, and the fountain of Kauthar will be on the Plain of Gathering. Two channels will flow from the river of Paradise into the fountain of Gathering, augmenting

its supply of water.

[4] It reconciles the narratives that tell us that the believers will arrive at the fountain of Kauthar before their entry into Paradise.

[5] Some people will be turned away from the fountain, because they later on turned away from Islam, or they were not Muslims at all, but expressed their Islam only hypocritically. Their hypocrisy was exposed after the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Allah knows best!

There are Traditions that describe the cleanness and sweetness of water of Kauthar, and that its banks are adorned with pearls. These qualities cannot be compared with anything in this world.

If the revelation of Sūrah Al-Kauthar is in response to the taunting of the heathens who called him 'abtar' because he had lost his sons, as explained earlier, this Sūrah comforts him. They used to say that when he would pass away, there shall be none to take his name on account of having no male offspring and his activities will cease. This Sūrah tells him that he has been granted Al-Kauthar and completely dismisses the reproach of his enemies, in that his lineage does not stop here in this world, but his spiritual lineage will continue till the Day of Gathering. His spiritual sons and daughters will outnumber the Ummahs of the previous Prophets. They will also enjoy the greatest respect and honor.

Prayer and Sacrifice

Verse [108:2] فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَأَنْحَرْ (So, offer *ṣalāh* [prayer] to your Lord, and sacrifice.) The imperative *inḥar* is derived from *naḥr* which means 'to sacrifice by stabbing upwards into the jugular vein [the way of slaughter for camels as opposed to other cattle]'. As the Arabs generally used to sacrifice camels, the verse employs the imperative *wanḥar*. Occasionally, the word *naḥr* is used in the general sense of 'sacrifice'.

Verse [108:1] vehemently denounces the false notion of the unbelievers and gives glad tidings of Kauthar to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in this world as well as in the next world. He will have the abundant goodness in both the worlds immeasurably. The current verse directs the Holy Prophet ﷺ the way to express his gratitude to Allah on this good tiding: [1] prayer; and [2] sacrifice. *Ṣalāh* is the highest form of physical worship; and sacrifice is highest form of pecuniary or monetary form of worship.

Sacrifice in the name of Allah is a fight against idolatry, because the idolaters used to sacrifice in the name of their idols. On that basis, Islamic sacrifice is distinctive and important. On another occasion, the Qur'an jointly mentions prayer and sacrifice, thus: [6:162]

إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

My prayer, my offering, my life and my death are all for Allah, the Lord of the worlds. [6:162]

According to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ, 'Ata', Mujāhid, Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى and others, the imperative *wanhar* means 'sacrifice or offer oblation'. Some people have attributed to some leading exegetes that they have taken this imperative to mean: 'Fold your hands or arms on the chest' Ibn Kathīr holds such narrations as '*munkar*', (that is, a narration which is narrated by a weak narrator and contradicts the narration of a stronger and more reliable authority.)

The Enemy of the Prophet ﷺ is Cut Off

Verse [108:3] إِنَّ شَانِئَكَ هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ (Surely, it is your enemy whose traces are cut off.) The word *shāni'* as used in the original is derived from *sha'n* and means 'one who hates, traducer, insulter'. This verse was revealed in connection with the unbelievers who used to taunt the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and referred to him as '*abtar*'. Most narratives identify the traducer as 'Aṣ Ibn Wā'il, others identify him as 'Uqbah and yet others identify him as Ka'b Ibn Ashraf. Allah granted the Messenger of Allah ﷺ the Kauthar, that is, abundant goodness which includes a multitude of children. How wonderful are the works of Allah! There is no scarcity of lineal children of the holy Prophet ﷺ. Furthermore, a Prophet is the spiritual father of his entire Ummah which comprises his spiritual children. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is the spiritual father of his entire Ummah till the end of time and as such will have the largest number of spiritual children compared to the Ummahs of the previous Prophets. In this way, the enemy has been rebutted, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, their argument has been rebuffed that it is not the Prophet ﷺ, but his enemies are, '*abtar*' or cut off.

Note

Imagine how Allah has raised the name of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and exalted his reputation in every nook and corner of the world since the

inception of his prophet-hood till today, and it will continue to be so until the end of time. His blessed name is recited along with Allah's name five times a day from the minarets. In the Hereafter, he will be granted the (Al-Maqām Al-Maḥmūd) Praised Station where he will make the Grand Intercession on behalf of the entire progeny of 'Ādam عليه السلام. On the contrary, ask the world history: Where are the children of 'Āṣ Ibn Wā'il? Where are the children of Ka'b Ibn Ashraf ? where are the children of 'Uqbah, and what happened to their families? Their very own names have been lost to the world. No one cares to remember them. They have become unknown who thought that soon the Holy Prophet ﷺ will become unknown. They have left this world and the strings of their lineage have been cut off. Their names have been preserved in Islamic traditions only for purposes of interpretation of relevant verses. "فَاعْتَبِرُوا يَا أُولِيَ الْأَبْصَارِ" "So, O People of insight, take note !" [59:2].

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Kauthar
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn (The Disbelievers)

This Sūrah is Makki, and it has 6 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 6

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿١﴾ لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٢﴾ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا
أَعْبُدُ ﴿٣﴾ وَلَا أَنَا عَابِدٌ مَّا عَبَدْتُمْ ﴿٤﴾ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ ﴿٥﴾
لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ ﴿٦﴾

Say, "O disbelievers, [1] I do not worship that which you worship, [2] nor do you worship the One whom I worship. [3] And neither I am going to worship that which you have worshipped, [4] nor will you worship the One whom I worship. [5] For you is your faith, and for me, my faith." [6]

Virtues and Characteristics of the Sūrah

Sayyidah 'A'shah رضي الله عنها reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has said that it is better to recite two sūrahs in the *sunnah* prayer of *fajr*, namely, the Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn and Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ. [Transmitted by Ibn Hishām as quoted by Maẓharī]. Ibn Kathīr cites several traditions in which a large number of Companions report that they heard the Messenger of Allah often recite Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn and Al-Ikhlāṣ in the *sunnah* prayer of *fajr* and *maghrib*. Some of the Companions requested the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to teach them some supplications to recite at the time of sleeping. He taught them to recite Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn and said that this will give them immunity from idolatry. [Transmitted by Tirmidhī and Abū Dāwūd]. Sayyidnā

Jubair Ibn Muʿīim ؓ says that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked him whether he wished to be the happiest, most prosperous and well-to-do person among his comrades when he goes out on a journey. He replied: "Yes, Messenger of Allah, I certainly do wish that." The Holy Prophet ﷺ asked him to recite the last five surahs of the Qurʾān starting from Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn to the end, and to start every surah with *Bismillah*, and to end with *Bismillah*. Sayyidnā Jubair ؓ says that in those days he used to be distressed, miserable and man of little provisions for journeys compared to his comrades. But when he started acting upon this teaching of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, he became more prosperous than others. [Maḏharī with reference to Abū Yaʿlā]. Sayyidnā ʿAlī ؓ reports that once a scorpion bit the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, so he asked for water and salt. He applied the water on the spot where the scorpion bit him, and he recited Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn, Sūrah Al-Falaq and Sūrah An-Nās. [Maḏharī]

Cause of Revelation

Ibn Ishāq reports from Sayyidnā Ibn ʿAbbās ؓ that Walīd Ibn Mughīrah, ʿAṣ Ibn Waʿil, Aswad Ibn ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib and Umayyah Ibn Khalaf approached the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and proposed a compromise to him to the effect that he should worship their idols for a year, and they would worship Allah for a year. [Qurtubī]. According to Sayyidnā Ibn ʿAbbās ؓ, as recorded in Ṭabarānī, the pagans of Makkah proposed to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: "We shall give you so much of wealth that you will become the richest man in Makkah; we shall give you whichever woman you like in marriage; we are willing to follow and obey you as our leader on condition that you do not speak ill of our gods. If you do not agree to this, then let us agree that you worship our gods for a year and we would worship your God for another year" [Maḏharī].

According to Abū Ṣāliḥ's report, Sayyidnā Ibn ʿAbbās ؓ narrates that the pagans of Makkah made the following proposal for compromise: "At least touch some of our gods, we will believe in you." Upon this, Jibraʿīl ؑ descended with Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn.

This Sūrah is the Sūrah of disavowal from the actions of the pagans, and enjoins the Muslims to worship Allah alone to the exclusion of all forms of pagan worship.

The Traditions cited above indicate that the pagans had made many

proposals to the Holy Prophet ﷺ not once or in a single session, but on different occasions and in different sessions in the hope that at one time or another a compromise might be reached. Therefore, there was a need to respond to all the proposals definitely and decisively, and thus frustrate their hope once and for all. All these incidents might have taken place at different times and different places. The purport of the Sūrah is to prevent or prohibit any such compromise.

Verse [109:2] لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ (I do not worship that which you worship,) In this Sūrah, the statements are repeated. The repetition has been explained in different ways by different authorities. Bukhārī explains it thus: When two identical, or near identical, expressions occur side by side, many commentators interpret one of them as happening in the present time and the other as going to happen in the future time. Thus there is no meaningless repetition. The second and the third verses refer to the present time, meaning 'I do not worship at the present time what you are worshipping, nor do you worship at the present time what I am worshipping'. That is, 'I believe in Oneness of Allah and worship Him only, whereas you believe in multiple gods and goddesses and worship them'. Verses [4 and 5] refer to the future time, meaning 'neither is there a possibility that I will ever worship what you are going to worship in the future, nor will you worship what I will persist in worshipping.' In other words, 'I will persist in my belief of Divine Oneness and worship of Him and you will persist in belief of multiple gods and goddesses and worship of them'. Maulānā Ashraf ‘Alī Thānawī رحمه الله تعالى has preferred this interpretation in Bayān-ul-Qur‘ān, (and the translation given above is based on it.) However, he disagrees with Bukhārī's interpretation of the word *dīn*, which Bukhārī interprets as 'the religion of disbelief and the religion of Islam' respectively, in verse [6] لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ "For you is your faith, and for me, my faith" meaning the proposed compromise or peace agreement is not acceptable. I shall continue to follow my faith and you may go on following your faith, and suffer its disastrous consequences. In Bayān-ul-Qur‘ān, however, the word *dīn* has been interpreted as *jazā'* or 'retribution or requital'.

Ibn Kathīr prefers another interpretation. He expounds that the particle *ma* is used in two ways: [1] as *mawṣūlah* or relative pronoun in the sense of *al-ladhī* [that which]; and [2] as *masdariyah* transforming

into infinitive the verb it governs. In this Sūrah, the first *mā* is a relative pronoun in the sense of *al-ladhī*, and the second *mā* is an infinitival particle. Thus in verses [2 & 3] the particle is a relative pronoun and may be paraphrased thus: 'I do not worship the deities that you worship nor do you worship the One Whom I worship' and in verses [4 & 5] the particle is an infinitival particle and may be paraphrased thus: *ولا انا عابدٌ عبادتكم ولا انتم عابدون عبادتي* 'I will never adopt your mode or manner of worship, nor will you adopt the manner in which I worship'. In this way, verses [2 & 3] show that the objects of worship are different from each other, and verses [4&5] show the differences in the modes of worship. In sum, 'neither our objects of worship, nor our manner of worship, are commonly shared by us; they are different.' In this way, it is seen that there is no real repetition, because while the formal expressions might be identical or near identical, but deeper semantic meanings are different. The mode of worship was revealed to the Prophet by Allah ﷻ and passed on to the Muslims through him. The pagan manner of worship is self-fabricated. Ibn Kathīr prefers this interpretation, and says that this is the exact meaning that emanates from the credo of Islam: *لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله* "There is no object worthy of worship except Allah, Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah". Only the mode and manner of worship sanctioned by Allah is credible, and should be followed by Muslims. Ibn Kathīr adds that the concluding verse *لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ* (For you is your faith, and for me, my faith) yields the sense of other verses in the Qur'ān, as for instance in [10: 41] *فَإِنْ كَذَّبُوكَ فَقُلْ لِي عَمَلِي وَلَكُمْ عَمَلُكُمْ* And if they belie you, say, for me, my deeds, and for you, your deeds and in [28:55] *لَنَا أَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ* (For us, our deeds, and for you, your deeds). Thus the sum total of the word *din*, according to Ibn Kathīr, refers to the 'deeds of religion' and its purport would be the same as explicated in Bayān-ul-Qur'ān, in that each one will be requited for his own deeds.

Other commentators have interpreted the two sentences in a third way. According to them, the particle is retained in both places as a relative pronoun, and in both the sentence is taken as representing present tense. They in fact maintain that the repetition of the two sentences have been used as a rhetorical device and employed by deliberate design to secure emphasis. Not every repetition is unpleasant or meaningless, even though the same idea may be reiterated by the same

wording, as for instance in [94: 5-6] فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا (Undoubtedly, along with hardship there is ease. Undoubtedly, along with hardship there is ease) Verse [6] is the repetition of verse [5] and is deliberately reiterated to secure emphasis, as well as to reject outright the several proposals made on different occasions. [Ibn Kathīr, Ibn Jarīr].

Peace Treaty with Unbelievers is Permissible in Some Cases but not in Others

Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn dismisses out of hand the many proposals of compromise offered by the pagans and declares dissociation from them. But the Holy Qur'an itself has said in [8:61] وَإِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلَامِ فَاجْعَلْ لَهَا (And if they tilt towards peace, you tilt towards it." that is, enter into peace treaty with the infidels or pagans or non-Muslims. Moreover, when the Holy Prophet ﷺ migrated to Madīnah, he entered into peace treaty with the Jews . Therefore, some of the commentators have opined that Surah Al-Kāfirūn has been abrogated. Their basic argument pivots around the verse لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ (For you is your faith, and for me, my faith). They contend that this is apparently in conflict with the ordinances of *jihād*, but this is not true, because the verse does not guarantee, nor does it even permit, the infidels to maintain their infidelity. It simply means what is stated in [28:55] لَنَا أَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ (For us, our deeds, and for you, your deeds), that is, as you sow, so shall you reap. In fact, the correct position held by the majority of the scholars is that this Sūrah is not abrogated. The proposals of compromise that were offered by the pagans at the time of the revelation of the present Sūrah are still prohibited, and the peace treaties allowed by 8:61 or entered into by the Holy Prophet ﷺ are still permissible. It is necessary to understand the circumstances and conditions of the treaty and take a proper decision accordingly. In one of his Traditions, the Holy Prophet ﷺ laid down the general principle of peace treaty with the infidels and pagans, thus: اَصْلَحُوا اَحْلَ حَرَامًا اَوْ حَرَّمَ حَلَالًا (Every compromise is permitted except the one which turns prohibited things into lawful and lawful things into forbidden.) If the various peace proposals made by the pagans are carefully analyzed, they were all certainly and definitely purported to mix elements of pagan beliefs and practices with Islamic beliefs and practices, thus creating confusion; and in some cases they required Muslims to renounce Islam [albeit temporarily] and commit themselves to paganism. Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn

denounces such treaties, and declares dissociation from paganism. Analyzing the peace pact with the Jews, on the other hand, it is seen clearly that it did not in anyway require Muslims to denounce or renounce Islam, nor did it require them to mix elements of un-Islamic beliefs with the true faith. Islam is the religion that stands for tolerance, kindness, politeness and peace more than any other religion. However, all these ethical principles can be applied in the matters of human rights. There is no room for compromise in the matter of Divine Law or the basic tenets of Divine religion . Allah knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn
Ends here

Sūrah An-Naṣr (The Help)

This Sūrah is Madnī, and it has 3 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 3

إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ ﴿١﴾ وَرَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ
أَفْوَاجًا ﴿٢﴾ فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَاسْتَغْفِرْهُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ تَوَّابًا ﴿٣﴾

When there comes Allah's help and the Victory, [1] and you see people entering Allah's (approved) religion in multitudes, [2] then pronounce the purity and praise of your Lord, and seek forgiveness from Him. Surely He is Ever-Relenting. [3]

Name of the Sūrah and place of its revelation

According to the consensus of scholars, this Sūrah was revealed in Madīnah. Its other name is Sūrah At-Tawdī'. The word Tawdī' means 'to bid farewell'. As this Sūrah indicates the approach of the demise of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, it bids farewell to him and is thus entitled Sūrah At-Tawdī'.

The Last Sūrah and the Last Verses of the Noble Qur'ān

It is recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ that Sūrah An-Naṣr was the last Sūrah to be revealed. [Qurtubī]. This means that this was the last complete Sūrah that was revealed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. No complete Sūrah was revealed after this. Some individual verses reported to have been revealed after this are not in conflict with this statement, because no complete Sūrah was sent

down after the present one. It is like Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah which is said to be the first Sūrah, while a few verses of Sūrah Al-‘Alaq, a few verses of Sūrah Al-Muddaththir, and a few verses of other Sūrahs were revealed even before Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah, because it means that it was the first Sūrah to be revealed completely. No complete Sūrah was revealed before Al-Fātiḥah.

Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه reports that this Sūrah was revealed during the Farewell Pilgrimage, and shortly after that a fragment of verse [3] of Sūrah [5] الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ (...Today, I have perfected your religion for you [5:3]) was revealed. After these two revelations, the Messenger of Allah lived only for eighty days, after which he passed away. After these two revelations, the Holy Prophet ﷺ received the verse of *kalalah*. Then the Holy Prophet ﷺ lived for fifty days. After that he received the following verse [9:128] of Sūrah [9] لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ (Surely, there has come to you a Messenger from amongst you, hard on whom is your suffering, for the good of you he craves...) After this revelation, he lived for 35 days. After this verse was revealed the following verse: [2:281] إِن تَوَلَّوْا يَوْمًا تَرْجَعُونَ فِيهِ إِلَى اللَّهِ (And be fearful of a day when you shall be returned to Allah...). After this verse he lived only for twenty-one days, and according to Muqātil, he lived for seven days only and passed away. [Qurtubī].

Verse [110:1] إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ (When there comes Allah's help and the victory). The expression 'victory' here is in reference to 'the promised Victory or Conquest of Makkah'. There is complete unanimity on this historical fact. However, the scholars disagree whether this Sūrah was revealed before or after the Conquest. The phrase *idhā jā'a* [when there comes] apparently indicates that its revelation took place before the Conquest. Rūḥ-ul-Ma‘ānī cites a narration from Al-Baḥr-ul-Muḥīṭ which concurs with this view, in which it is stated that this Sūrah was revealed while returning from the expedition of *Khaibar*. It is a known fact that the victory of *Khaibar* took place prior to the Conquest of Makkah. Rūḥ-ul-Ma‘ānī cites, on the authority of ‘Abd Ibn Ḥumaid, Sayyidnā Qatādah's رضي الله عنه statement that the Prophet ﷺ lived for two years after the revelation of this Sūrah. Narratives that report that it was revealed on the occasion of the Conquest of Makkah or on the occasion of the Farewell

Pilgrimage may be explained by saying that the Holy Prophet ﷺ might have recited this Sūrah and proclaimed it on one of those occasions; as a result people must have thought that it was revealed on that occasion. Please refer to Bayānul Qurʾān for fuller explanation.

Several Prophetic Traditions and statements of the Companions narrate that this Sūrah indicates that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has fulfilled his task, and accomplished his mission of life, and he could look forward to returning to his Lord in full favor as his death was approaching fast. The Sūrah teaches the Holy Prophet ﷺ the beautiful manners of asking Allah's forgiveness and offering constant praise and thanks to his Lord.

It is reported in Muqātil's narration that when this Sūrah was revealed, the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited it in a gathering of the blessed Companions, among whom were Sayyidnā Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, Saʿd Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ ؓ. All were happy at the revelation of this Sūrah, because it contained the glad tidings of the Conquest of Makkah, but Sayyidnā ʿAbbās ؓ began to weep. The Holy Prophet ﷺ asked him the reason for weeping, and he replied that it covertly conveys the termination of your life and nearness of your death. The Holy Prophet ﷺ confirmed this. Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī records a similar explanation of this Sūrah given by Sayyidnā Ibn ʿAbbās ؓ in which there is the addition that when Sayyidnā ʿUmar ؓ heard this, he concurred with him and said: 'I do not know anything about it other than what you [Ibn ʿAbbās ؓ] have said'. [Transmitted by Tirmidhī who graded it as *ḥasan*, *ṣaḥīḥ* vide Qurṭubī]

Verse [110:2] وَرَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا (And you see people entering Allah's [approved] religion in multitudes,) Before the conquest of Makkah there were many people who were almost convinced of the verity of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and Islam, but there were several factors that were obstructing them to embrace the religion. Some people were afraid of the Quraishite opposition, or they were hesitant for some other reason. The Conquest of Makkah removed those obstacles, and people entered the fold of Islam in throngs. Seven hundred people from Yemen embraced the religion, and joined the Holy Prophet ﷺ. On the way, they recited the call to prayer [*adhān*] and recited the Qurʾān. In this way, the populace of Arabia embraced the religion of Islam and entered into its fold

in droves.

When the approach of death is sensed, one needs to exert oneself immensely in *Tasbīḥ* and *Istighfār*

Verse [110:3] فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَاسْتَغْفِرْهُ (then pronounce the purity and praise of your Lord, and seek forgiveness from Him...) Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah Ṣiddiqah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا says that after the revelation of this Sūrah, whenever the Messenger of Allah ﷺ performed a prayer, he would recite the following supplication: سُبْحَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَبِحَمْدِكَ اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي (I pronounce Your purity, O Allah, our Lord, and praise be to You, O Allah, forgive me.) [Bukhārī].

Sayyidah ‘Umm Salamah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا says that after the revelation of this Sūrah, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to often recite the following supplication: سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ (I pronounce the purity of Allah, and praise be to Him. I seek Allah's forgiveness and I repent to Him.) He used to say, "I have been commanded to do so." In evidence, he used to recite this Sūrah.

Sayyidnā Abu Hurairah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ says that after the revelation of this Sūrah, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to exert himself in the worship of Allah so immensely that his feet would swell. [Qurṭubī].

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah An-Naṣr
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Lahab

(The Flame)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 5 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 5

تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ ﴿١﴾ مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَ ﴿٢﴾
 سَيَصْلَىٰ نَارًا ذَاتَ لَهَبٍ ﴿٣﴾ وَامْرَأَتُهُ حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ ﴿٤﴾ فِي
 جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّن مَّسَدٍ ﴿٥﴾

**Perish the two hands of Abū Lahab, and perish he! [1]
 Neither his wealth availed him, nor what he earned. [2]
 He will soon enter a fire, full of flames, [3] and his wife
 as well, the wicked¹ carrier of firewood. [4] In her neck
 there is a rope of twisted palm-fibre. [5]**

Name and Nickname of Abū Lahab

Abū Lahab [Father of Flame] was the Nickname of 'Abd-ul-'Uzzā, one of the sons of 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib. As he was ruddy in complexion, he was nicknamed Abū Lahab [Father of Flame]. The Qur'ān did not mention his real name, because it smacked of paganism, and the last element '*lahab*' [Flame] in the nickname has also nexus with the flame of Hell. This person was the inveterate enemy and persecutor of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and violently opposed Islam. Whenever the Holy Prophet ﷺ invited the people to Islamic Faith, he would stand up and cry lie to his message. [Ibn

(1) The word 'wicked' is though not available in the text in express terms, the *naṣb* on *ḥammālah*, which is termed in Arabic grammar as '*naṣb 'aladh-dhamm*' carries this meaning. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

Kathīr]

Cause of Revelation

It is recorded in the two Ṣaḥīḥs that when the verse وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ (Warn your closest relatives - 26:214) was revealed, the Holy Prophet ﷺ ascended the mount Ṣafā and cried out to the tribe of Quraish in a manner that was known among them for warning of an attack by the enemy. Some narratives maintain that he called the different Makkan clans by name, the clan of Banū 'Abd Munāf, Banū 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib and others. All the clans of Quraish gathered around him, and he said to them: 'If I were to tell you that the enemy is about to attack you in the morning or in the evening, would you believe me?' They all unanimously replied in the affirmative. Then he said: 'Verily, I am a warner sent to you before the coming of a severe torment (as a result of disbelief or paganism). Abū Lahab then responded: اَلْهَذَا جَمَعْتَنَّا 'Ruin may seize you ! Is it for this purpose that you have called us together?' and picked up a stone to hit him. Thus this Sūrah was revealed.

Verse [111:1] تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ (Perish the two hands of Abū Lahab, and perish he!) The word *yad* literally means a 'hand'. Because hands play a very important role in all of human works and actions, often *yad* (hand) refers to the human person, as in the phrase ذَلِكُمْ بِمَا قَدَّمْتُمْ يَدَاكَ (...All this is due to what your hands have sent forth...22:10). Baihaqī has recorded on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه that one day Abū Lahab said to the people that Muḥammad ﷺ says that such-and-such a thing will happen after death. Then, pointing to his hands, said that none of those things have come into these hands; then he addressed his hands and said: تَبَّ لَكُمَا مَا رَأَيْتُ فِيكُمَا شَيْئًا مِمَّا قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ (Perish you! I do not see any of the things Muḥammad ﷺ said in you.) Therefore, the Qur'ān attributes his destruction to his hands.

The verb *tabba* is derived from *tabab* which means 'to perish'. In verse [1], the first sentence تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ (Perish the two hands of Abū Lahab) is in the form of a prayer invoking or imprecating destruction upon Abū Lahab, and the second sentence *wa tabba* is the declarative sentence prophesying the consequence of the invocation. The first sentence was invoked against him to satisfy the indignation of the Muslims, because when Abū Lahab imprecated destruction upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ, it was the desire of the Muslims that imprecation be invoked against him.

Allah thus fulfilled their desire, and also informed them that the invocation has taken effect and he perished. Seven days after the battle of Badr, he developed a terrible case of plague because of which people avoided him. They regarded the disease as infectious and were afraid that it might be transmitted by contact, so they forced him to live in an isolated house, and they did not come into contact with him at all. He at last died in this state. His dead body lay untouched in his house for three days. When his body began to rot giving out unbearable stench, people taunted his sons, and they hired laborers to take it away and bury it. They dug a pit in the ground, pushed his body into it with a stick and covered it with stones. [Bayān-ul-Qur'ān from Rūḥ].

Verse [111:2] مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُ مَالُهُ، وَمَا كَسَبَ (Neither his wealth availed him, nor what he earned.) The phrase *mā kasab* [what he earned] could refer to the profits that accrued to him from investment of his wealth in business, and it could also imply 'children', for the children of a person are also referred to (in Arabic) as his earning. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها reports that the Messenger of Allah said:

ان اطيب ما اكل الرجل من كسبه وان ولده من كسبه

"The best and the purest thing a man eats is from his earnings and his children are part of his earnings".

This means that eating from the earnings of one's children is tantamount to eating from one's own earnings. [Qurṭubī]

Therefore, Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها, Mujāhid, 'Aṭā', Ibn Sīrīn and others interpret *mā kasab* [what he earned] as referring to 'children'. Allah had granted Abū Lahab abundant wealth and many children, and these two factors led him to be ungrateful, and caused him to be proud and arrogant. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه says that when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ called his people to faith and warned them about the Divine punishment, Abū Lahab said: "Even if what my nephew says is true, I will save myself from the painful torment on the Day of Judgement with my wealth and my children." Thus Allah revealed verse [2] مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُ مَالُهُ، وَمَا كَسَبَ, that is, when the Divine torment seized him in this world, neither his wealth nor his children benefited him!

Verse [111:3] سَيَصْلَىٰ نَارًا ذَاتَ لَهَبٍ (He will enter a fire, full of flames.) That is, either on the Day of Judgment or immediately after his death, while in

grave, he will be pushed into the blazing fire. There is a rhetorical relationship between Abū Lahab and *dhāta lahab* [full of flames].

The Fate of 'Umm Jamīl, the Wife of Abū Lahab

Verse [111:4] **وَأَمْرَأَتُهُ حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ** (And his wife as well, the wicked, the carrier of firewood.) As Abū Lahab was a vehement enemy of the Holy Messenger ﷺ, his wife too was supportive of her husband in his disbelief, rejection, obstinacy, and in persecuting the Holy Prophet ﷺ. She was a sister of Abū Sufyān, and daughter of Harb Ibn 'Umayyah. Her nickname was Umm Jamīl. The Qur'ān makes plain in this verse that this wretched woman will also roast with her husband in the fire of Hell. She is described as **حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ** which literally means 'the carrier of firewood'. Idiomatically, Arabs use this expression to refer to a 'tale-bearer', that is, one who gathers pieces of gossip and carries them between individuals and families in order to ignite the fires of discord and enmity between people, exactly as one would gather firewood to kindle the fire. This telltale woman improperly carried information concerning the private affairs of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and the blessed Companions in an attempt to ignite and instigate trouble. In this verse too, the phrase 'the carrier of firewood' has been interpreted by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ, Mujāhid, 'Ikrimah رحمه الله تعالى and a group of commentators to mean that 'She was a tale-bearer' while Ibn Zaid, Ḍaḥḥāk and other commentators رحمه الله تعالى retain it in its original sense, and explain that she literally used to collect thorny branches from the jungle, and place them in the path of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in order to harm him - hence the description: 'carrier of firewood'. [Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr].

Some scholars explain that just as she used to help her husband in this world to promote disbelief and tyranny and to assist him in harming the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, she will add to the torment of her husband in the Hereafter. She will collect the branches of *zaqqūm* and other trees and add them as fuel to the fire of Hell in which her husband would be roasting. [Ibn Kathīr].

Tale-Bearing: A Gravely Major Sin

It is recorded in the two Ṣaḥīḥs that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said that a tale-bearer (to harm others) will not enter Paradise. Fuḍail Ibn 'Iyād رحمه الله تعالى says that there are three evil deeds of man that destroy all his righteous actions. They are: [1] backbiting; [2]

tale-bearing; and [3] lying. 'Aṭā' Ibn Sā'ib رحمه الله تعالى says that he asked Sha'bi رحمه الله تعالى about the Prophetic Tradition in which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said: لا يدخل الجنة سافك دم ولا مشاء بنميمة ولا تاجر يربى. "Three types of people will not enter Paradise: [1] a murderer; [2] a tale-bearer; and [3] a trader who is involved in usury." 'Aṭā' رحمه الله تعالى says that I cited this Tradition to Sha'bi and asked him in a surprising tone that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has equated 'a tale-bearer' with a murderer and a usurer. He replied: "Indeed, tale-bearing is the root cause of murder and usurpation of wealth." [Qurṭubī]

Verse [111:5] فِي جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّن مَّسَدٍ (In her neck there is a rope of twisted palm-fibre.) The *masd* with the letter-s-bearing *sukūn* [quiescence or rest] is an infinitive which means 'to twist rope or cord, or to twist it strongly and tightly'. If the word is read as *māsād* with the letters *m-s* bearing *fatha* [= a-a], the word refers to fibres. It is also a rope made of 'twisted fibres of palm tree' or 'tightly braided fibres of coconut tree' or 'cord that has been woven strongly' or 'coil or cable formed by winding iron strands together'. [al-Qāmūs]. Some scholars have preferred to translate it specifically as 'a rope made of twisted fibres of palm tree' and no other string or twine. This is in conformity with the general usage of the Arabs. Basically, it refers to any string or twine or rope or cord or coil or cable formed by intertwining strands of any material. In keeping with this general sense of the word, Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, 'Urwah Ibn Zubair رضي الله عنه and others said that in this context the phrase حَبْلٌ مِّن مَّسَدٍ "rope of masad" refers to 'rope formed by twisting iron strands'. This will be her condition in Hell where an iron-collar will be in her neck. Sayyidnā Mujāhid رضي الله عنه interprets *min masad* as *min ḥadīd*, that is, 'of iron'. [Maḥḥarī].

Sha'bi, Muqātil and other commentators have taken the phrase *min masad* to refer to 'a rope made of twisted fibres of palm tree' and said that Abū Lahab and his wife were extremely wealthy and were looked upon as leaders of their nation but, on account of his wife's mean disposition and miserliness, she used to collect firewood from the jungle, bind them together with a rope, place the bundle on her head and put its rope round her neck, so that it might not fall from her head. This practice of hers one day led to her destruction. She had a bundle of wood on her head and the rope in her neck. She felt tired and sat down. Then fell, was choked and

died. According to this second interpretation, the verse describes her mean disposition and the disastrous consequences of her sadistic behavior. [Mazharī]. However, such a conduct in Abū Lahab's family, especially of his wife, was hardly conceivable; therefore, most commentators have preferred the first interpretation. Allah knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Lahab
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ

(The Sincerity)

This Sūrah is Makki, and it has 4 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 4

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ﴿١﴾ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ ﴿٢﴾ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ ﴿٣﴾ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ ﴿٤﴾

Say, "The truth is: Allah is One. [1] Allah is Besought of all, needing none. [2] He neither begot anyone, nor was begotten. [3] And equal to Him has never been any one."
[4]

Cause of Revelation

Tirmidhī, Ḥākim and others have recorded that the pagans of Makkah asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: "O Muḥammad! Tell us about the ancestry of your Lord." So Allah revealed this Sūrah. Some narratives ascribe this inquiry to the Jews of Madīnah. In view of these conflicting reports, there is a divergence of opinion as to whether this is a Makki Sūrah or Madani Sūrah. According to Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh Ibn Mas‘ūd ؓ, Ḥasan Baṣrī, ‘Aṭā’, ‘Ikrimah and Jābir ؓ, the Sūrah is Makki and, according to Qatādah, Ḍaḥḥāk ؓ and others, it is Madani. According to one narration of Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ, it is Makki and, according to another, it is Madani [Qurtubī].

According to another narration, the pagans added to their question whether Allah was made of gold, silver or some other stuff, in response to which this Sūrah was revealed.

Virtues of the Sūrah

Imām Aḥmad has recorded a narration in his Musnad that a person came up to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and said, "I love this Sūrah [Al-Ikhlāṣ] immensely." The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied: "Your love for it will cause you to enter Paradise." [Ibn Kathīr].

Tirmidhī has recorded on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ that once the Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked the people to gather and said: "I shall recite to you a third of the Qur'ān?" When the people had congregated, he recited Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ and said: "This is equal to a third of the Qur'ān." [Muslim].

In a lengthy Ḥadīth, Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī and Nasā'ī have recorded that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Anyone who recites Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ and the *mu'awwadhatain* (i.e. the last two *sūrahs* of the Holy Qur'ān) morning and evening, they shall be sufficient for him." In another narration, the wordings are: "They will suffice him against every affliction." [Ibn Kathīr]

Imām Aḥmad has recorded a narration in his Musnad on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Uqbah Ibn 'Amir ؓ that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "I shall show you three such Sūrahs that are revealed in Torah, Injīl, Zabūr and the Qur'ān. Do not sleep at night until such time that you have recited them. They are Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ and the *mu'awwadhatain*." Sayyidnā 'Uqbah Ibn 'Amir ؓ says that since I have heard this, I did not miss reciting them. [Ibn Kathīr].

Oneness of Allah

Verse [112:1] قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ Say, (The truth is: Allah is One.) The imperative *qul* (Say) is directly addressed to the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, thus indicating that he is Allah's Prophet and Messenger. This verse directs and commands him to convey Allah's message to mankind. 'Allah' is the personal name of that Necessary Being Whose non-existence is inconceivable. He comprises all the attributes of perfection and is free from, or above, or overrides all kinds of imperfections. The epithets *aḥad* and *wāḥid* are both applied to Allah which are normally translated as 'One' but the word *aḥad* includes an additional sense which signifies that Allah is beyond composition, plurality and resemblance, which means that He is neither composed of

any elements, nor does He have any partner, nor has He any resemblance to anything. This is a response to those who asked about Allah whether He is made of gold or silver or pearls. This concise statement covers all aspects of discussion on the Divine Being and His attributes. The imperative *qul* [say] points to the messengership of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. If analyzed properly, this brief sentence covers all the detailed discussions expounded in voluminous books of theology.

Verse [112:2] **اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ** (Allah is Besought of all, needing none) The word *ṣamad* bears several literal senses. Therefore, the Qur'ānic exegetical scholars have assigned different meanings to this verse. Ṭabarānī, the leading authority on Prophetic Traditions, in his *kitāb-us-Sunnah*, has collected all the interpretations of the Divine attribute *Aṣ-ṣamad* and concluded that they are all authentic, and comprehend all the attributes of our Lord that have been assigned to Him, but originally it refers to 'the chief who has no superior and to whom the people turn for the fulfilment of their desires and needs; thus all people depend on him, but he does not depend on any one.' [Ibn Kathīr].

Allah is Above having Children and Procreating

Verse [112:3] **لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ** (He neither begot anyone, nor was begotten.) This verse responds to those who had questioned about the ancestry of Allah. There is no analogy between Allah, the Creator, and His creation. While His creation comes into being through the biological process of procreation, Allah Himself has no children, nor is He the child of anyone.

Verse [4] **وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ** (And equal to Him has never been any one.) The word *kufuwan*, as used in the original, means an 'example', a 'similar thing', 'one equal in rank and position'. Thus this verse means that there is no one in the entire universe, nor ever was, nor ever can be, who is similar to Allah, or equal in rank with Him, or resembling Him in His attributes, works and powers in any degree whatsoever.

Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ: A Comprehensive Concept of Allah's Oneness and a complete Negation of Shirk

There were many types of people who denied the Divine Oneness, and set up partners or rivals to Allah. Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ negates all types of such wrong belief systems, and imparts a comprehensive lesson of Divine Oneness. Among the unbelievers, several types may be identified. There

is a group that denies the very existence of God [the atheists]. Another group believes in the existence of God, but denies that His existence is 'Necessary'. A third group believes in God's existence and in His existence as 'Necessary' but denies His attributes of perfection. A fourth group believes in God's Necessary Existence and in His attributes of perfection, but denies Oneness of God and believes in and worship more than one gods and goddesses, and thus practices polytheism. Verse [1] refutes vehemently all such false belief systems. Verse [2] refers to the practices of those who do worship Allah alone, but believe that there are also other helpers who can fulfil their needs, desires and ambitions. The Divine attribute *Aṣ-ṣamad* denounces outright any such notion. A fifth group ascribes children to Allah and the phrase *lam yalid* [He neither begot anyone] repudiates this notion of theirs in the strongest terms. Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best!

**Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ
Ends here**

Sūrah Al-Falaq

(Break of Dawn)

This Sūrah is Madanī, and it has 5 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 5

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ ﴿١﴾ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ ﴿٢﴾ وَمِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ إِذَا وَقَبَ ﴿٣﴾ وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفَّاثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ ﴿٤﴾ وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ ﴿٥﴾

Say, "I seek refuge with the Lord of the daybreak [1] from the evil of everything He has created, [2] and from the evil of the dark night when it penetrates, [3] and from the evil of the women who blow on the knots, [4] and from the evil of an envier when he envies. [5]

Preliminary Remarks

This and the next Sūrah were revealed on the same occasion, and in the same event, as will be explained in the 'cause of revelation'. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn-ul-Qayyim has, therefore, written their commentary together. He writes that their blessings and benefits are abundant. All of the people require them and no one can dispense with them. They are very efficacious remedy for sorcery or magical spell, evil eye, and for all of the physical and spiritual calamities. In fact, if its reality is grasped fully, people will understand that they require it more than their breath, food, water, clothing and everything else.

Cause of Revelation

Musnad of Ahmad records that a Jewish person cast a magical spell on the Holy Prophet ﷺ, as a result of which he fell ill. Jibra'īl عليه السلام came

to him and informed him that a particular Jew had cast a spell on him, that he had tied knots in his hair to accomplish this objective, and it is thrown into a particular well. The Holy Prophet ﷺ sent some of his Companions to bring it from the well Jibra'il عليه السلام had described. The Holy Prophet ﷺ untied the knots, and he was instantly cured. Jibra'il عليه السلام informed him of the name of the Jew and the Holy Prophet ﷺ knew the culprit, but it was not in keeping with his compassionate disposition to avenge anyone in his personal matter. Therefore, this was never brought to the attention of the Jew guilty of the black magic, nor did any sign of complaint ever appear on the blessed face of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Being a hypocrite, he regularly attended the Holy Prophet's ﷺ gatherings.

The details of this incident are recorded in Sahih of Bukhari on the authority of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها that a Jewish man cast a magic spell on the Holy Prophet ﷺ, as a result of which he sometimes felt confused whether or not he had done something. One day the Holy Prophet ﷺ said to Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها that Allah has shown him what his illness was and added: "Two men came to me in my dream. One of them sat by my head side while the other sat by my feet, and the following conversation ensued:

Question: 'What is wrong with this man?'

Answer: 'He is bewitched.'

Question: 'Who has bewitched him?'

Answer: 'Labīd Ibn A'sam. He is a member of the tribe of Banū Zura'iq who is an ally of the Jews, a hypocrite.'

Question: 'With what did he bewitch him?'

Answer: 'With a comb and hair from the comb.'

Question: 'Where is the comb?'

Answer: 'In the dried bark of a male date palm under a rock in a well called *Dharwan*.'

Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها says that the Holy Prophet ﷺ went to the well to remove the comb with the hair and said: "This is the well I was shown in my dream." He removed it from the well. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها asked

the Holy Prophet ﷺ: "Will you not make this public?" He replied: "Allah has cured me and I hate to cause harm to anyone." This implies that the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not want to be the cause anyone's molestation, death or destruction, because this is what would have exactly happened if the incident was publicised.

According to a narration in Musnad of Aḥmad, this illness of the Holy Prophet ﷺ lasted for six months. According to other narratives, some of the Companions knew that this wicked act was performed by Labid Ibn A'sam, and they courteously said to the Holy Prophet ﷺ: "Why should we not kill this wicked person?" He made the same reply to them as he did to Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها. According to Imām Tha'labī's narration, a Jewish boy was the attendant of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the hypocritical Jew flattered the boy and talked him into getting for him strands of the Prophet's ﷺ hair from his comb, and a few of its teeth. Having obtained these items, he tied eleven knots on a string and a needle was stuck into each knot. Labīd then placed this spell in the spathe of a male palm tree, and buried it under a stone in a well. On this occasion, the two Sūrahs were revealed, comprising eleven verses. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ recited one verse at a time and untied one knot each time, until all the knots were untied, and he felt freed from the tension of the witchcraft. [All these narratives have been adapted from Ibn Kathīr.]

Magic and its effect on the Holy Prophet ﷺ

Some people are surprised that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ should be affected by black magic. This is because some people do not have a complete grasp of how magic operates. It actually operates under physical causes, and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was not immune to the influence of physical causes, as for instance feeling the burning or heating sensation of fire, and feeling the cooling sensation of water; or certain natural factors causing fever or body temperature to rise; or other factors causing aches and pains, and other illnesses. The Holy Prophet ﷺ, or any other prophet for that matter, was not immune to the effects of such natural or physical causes. They can be affected by the hidden operations of magic which are no less natural or physical. Please see Sūrah Al-Baqarah, Ma'āriful Qur'ān, Vol. 1/ pp 264-278 for fuller explanation, especially p. 276 on 'Magic and Prophets'.

***Mu'awwadhatain* are Sūrahs that afford protection against physical and spiritual afflictions**

It is a settled doctrine of every believer that Allah is the intrinsic cause of every gain and loss in this world as well as in the next world. Without the Divine will not a jot of gain or loss can be caused to anyone. The only way to fortify against all physical and spiritual injuries and harm is for man to place himself under the protection of Allah, and by his actions he should attempt to make himself capable of entering the Divine shelter.

Sūrah Al-Falaq directs how to seek the Divine protection against worldly calamities, and Sūrah An-Nās tells the way to seek Divine protection against the calamities of the Hereafter.

Virtues of *Mu'awwadhatain*

Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim records a Tradition on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Uqbah Ibn 'Āmir رضي الله عنه who reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Do you not see that there have been revealed to me verses tonight the like of which has not been seen before? Those are Sūrah Al-Falaq and Sūrah An-Nās." According to another narration, the like of *Mu'awwadhatain* has not revealed even in Torah, Injīl, or Zabūr or anywhere else in the Qur'ān. Another narration of Sayyidnā 'Uqbah Ibn 'Āmir رضي الله عنه reports that the Messenger of Allah taught him *Mu'awwadhatain* while they were on a journey. Then he recited them in the *maghrib ṣalāh* and said: "Recite these two Sūrahs whenever you go to sleep and whenever you get up." [Nasā'ī] According to another report, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has advised people to recite these two Sūrahs after every *ṣalāh* [Transmitted by Abū Dāwūd and Nasā'ī].

Imām Mālik recorded from Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها: "whenever the Messenger of Allah ﷺ suffered from an ailment, he would recite the *Mu'awwadhatain*, blow over his hands, and then wiped his whole body with those hands. When his pain became acute on his death-bed, I would recite the *Mu'awwadhatain*, blow over his hands, and then he wiped them over himself, because my hands could not be the fitting substitute for his blessed hands. [All these narratives have been adapted from Ibn Kathīr].

Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Khubayb رضي الله عنه reports that it was raining one night and the sky had become intensely dark. We went out looking for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and when he was found, he said: "Say ." He

asked: "What should I say?" He said: "Recite **قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ** and *Mu'awwadhatain*. Reciting them thrice in the morning and thrice in the evening will fortify you against all kinds of perturbations."

In sum, it was the practice of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his Companions to recite these two Sūrahs to protect themselves against all types of privations, trials and tribulations of life in this world, as well as of life in the next world.

Lexicological Analysis of important words and interpretation of the Sūrah

Verse [113:1] **قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ** (Say, "I seek refuge with the Lord of the Daybreak.") The word *falaq* means 'to split or cleave' and here it is used in the sense of 'break of dawn'. In another verse, a similar quality of Allah is used in [6:96] **فَالِقُ الْإِصْبَاحِ** ([He is] the One who causes the dawn to break). Of all the Divine attributes, this particular attribute is used presumably because the darkness of night often causes evils and difficulties, and the daylight removes them. This attribute of Allah points to the fact that anyone who seeks protection in Allah, He will remove all afflictions from him. [Maḏharī]

The word *Sharr*: 'Allāmah Ibn Qayyim's Exposition

Verse [113:2] **مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ** (From the evil of everything He has created.) 'Allāmah Ibn Qayyim expounds that the word *sharr* (evil) is employed in two different senses: [1] pain, loss, injury, trouble, grief, distress and affliction which affect man directly, and they are by themselves troubles and afflictions; and [2] the factors that cause losses, injuries and afflictions. The second type covers unbelief, idolatry and all sins. The things from which the Qur'ān and Sunnah require man to seek refuge in Allah are either of these two types. The Traditional supplication that is *masnūn* after *ṣalāh* includes seeking of refuge from four things: [1] punishment of the grave; [2] punishment of the Hell-Fire; [3] hardships and privations of life; and [4] trials and tribulations of death. Of these, the first two are afflictions and punishments in their own right, and the last two are causes of afflictions and punishments.

Verse [113:2] **مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ** (From the evil of everything He has created) covers the evil of the entire creation. This verse was sufficient to guard against all mischief and calamities. But three particular forms of evil have

been singled out to seek protection which often cause calamities and afflictions.

The first thing singled out appears in verse [113:3] وَمِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ إِذَا وَقَبَ (and from the evil of dark night when it penetrates.) The word *ghāsiq* is derived from *ghasaq* (to become dark or intensely dark). Thus Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه, Ḥasan and Mujāhid say that the word *ghasiq* stands for 'night'. The verb *waqaba* is derived from *wuqūb* which means for utter darkness 'to overspread completely and intensely'. The verse means : 'I seek refuge in Allah from the night when its darkness has completely and intensely overspread'. The word 'night' has been specifically mentioned because this is the time when Jinn, Satans, harmful insects, animals and reptiles appear. Thieves and robbers emerge at this time to carry out their crimes of stealing and other acts of wickedness. The enemies attack at this time. Black magic has the worst effect when it is intensely dark at night. As soon as the dawn approaches, the effects of all these things disappear and fade away. [‘Allāmah Ibn Qayyim]

Verse [113:4] وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفَّاثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ (and from the evil of the women who blow on the knots.) The word *naffāthāt* is derived from *naftḥ* which means 'to blow'. The word *‘uqad* is the plural of *‘uqdah* which means 'a knot'. The magicians usually tie knots on a string or piece of thread, recite magical incantations or formulae and blow on them as they do so. The phrase *النَّفَّاثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ* (...the women who blow on the knots) refers to female magicians. It is possible that the pre-adjectival noun of the adjective *naffāthāt* be *nufūs* [souls]. Thus this verse may be translated as 'the evil souls who blow on knots'. This translation would include men and women who carry out this evil practice. But most probably its pre-adjectival noun is 'womenfolk'. Women have been specifically mentioned perhaps because generally womenfolk have the natural disposition to carry out the evil practice of witchcraft; or probably because Labīd Ibn A‘ṣam, whose black magic was the cause of revelation of this Sūrah, got this most heinous act done by his daughters. Hence, the act of witchcraft is ascribed to them.

The reason why protection is sought against magicians is firstly that the cause of revelation of these two Sūrahs was the incident of magic. Secondly, people are normally unaware of the act of magicians, and they do not pay attention to getting themselves exorcised. They are under the impression that it is some kind of medical ailment and try to get

themselves medically cured. In the meantime the magical effect continues to grow worse.

The third thing from which people are asked specifically to seek protection is *ḥasid* [jealous] and *ḥasad* [jealousy]. This has been specified for the same reasons as given above, because black magic was worked on the Prophet ﷺ on account of jealousy. The Jews and the hypocrites could not bear to see the rapid progress and expansion of Islam. They could not defeat him in outer combat; therefore they tried to satisfy their jealousy by performing witchcraft on him. There were uncountable number of green-eyed monsters against the Prophet ﷺ. That is the major reason why protection was sought against them. Jealousy of the jealous one gives him restless days and sleepless nights. He is at all times after causing loss to his envied person. Therefore, the harm he wishes to inflict is severe.

***Ḥasad* [Jealousy] and *Ghibṭah* [Envy]**

The Arabic word *Ḥasad*, the English equivalent of which is 'jealousy', is invariably used in the bad sense. It generally means to desire the deprivation of the other man rather than one's own acquisition of any bliss that he may possess. Simply put, *Ḥasad* means that a person should feel unhappy at the better fortune and good quality that Allah has granted to another, and wishes that it should be taken away from the other person and given to him, or at least the other should be deprived of it. *Ḥasad* in this sense is totally forbidden and a major sin. This is the first sin that was committed in the heaven and also the first one committed on the earth. The Iblīs was jealous of 'Ādam ﷺ in the heaven and the latter's son Qābīl was jealous of his brother Hābīl on earth. [Qurṭubī].

Ghibṭah, on the other hand, means to desire for oneself the same blessing as the other man has, without any idea of the latter's losing it. This is not only permissible but also desirable.

Summary and Conclusion

Apart from the general protection that is sought in this Sūrah, protection is sought from three specific evils. These are mentioned separately in verses three, four and five. Furthermore, in the first and the third specific evils particular restrictions are placed. The first specific evil *gḥḥūsiq* [darkness] is restricted by the phrase إِذَا وَقَبَ "when it penetrates".

The third specific evil *ḥāsīd* is restricted by the phrase إِذَا حَسَدَ "when he envies". The practice of witchcraft is left unrestricted because its harmful effect is general. The harmful effect of darkness is felt when there is total absence of light, plunging the night in intense and utter darkness. Likewise, jealousy may not cause harm to its object until the jealous one takes a practical step with word or deed to satisfy his heart. For until he takes a practical step, his being unhappy may be harmful to himself, but it is not harmful for the other person so that he may seek refuge from it. Hence, restrictions are placed on the first and the third specific evils.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Falaq
Ends here

Sūrah An-Nās (The Mankind)

This Sūrah is Madanī, and it has 6 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 6

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ ﴿١﴾ مَلِكِ النَّاسِ ﴿٢﴾ إِلَهِ النَّاسِ ﴿٣﴾ مِنْ شَرِّ
الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ ﴿٤﴾ الَّذِي يُوَسْوِسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ ﴿٥﴾
مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ ﴿٦﴾

Say, "I seek refuge with the Lord of mankind, [1] the King of mankind, [2] the God of mankind, [3] from the evil of the whisperer who withdraws (when Allah's name is pronounced), [4] the one who whispers in the hearts of people, [5] whether from among the Jinn or Mankind. [6]

Introductory Remarks

This Sūrah, the second of the *Mu'awwadhatayn*, constitutes an extension of its predecessor and is in a way complementary to it, in that in Sūrah Al-Falaq the believers were enjoined to seek refuge with Allah against the hardships and privations of life in this world, while in the current Sūrah protection is sought from the trials and tribulations of the Hereafter. It was explained in Sūrah Al-Falaq that the word *sharr* could stand for 'evil' or 'harm' or even 'that which causes harm, anguish or distress'. In the present Sūrah, we are to seek refuge from the evil that is the cause of all sins, namely, the whisperings and insinuations of Satan. As the anguish and distress of the Hereafter is most severe, the Qur'ān

appropriately emphasizes at the end to seek Allah's protection against these evil powers.

Verse [114:1] قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ Say, (I seek refuge with the Lord of mankind,) The attributive name of Allah *rabb* stands for 'one who nurtures', and implies that the Supreme Nurturer takes care of everything under all circumstances. In the present verse, He is referred to as 'the Lord of mankind', while in the previous Sūrah He was referred to as 'the Lord of the daybreak', because in the foregoing Sūrah the purpose was to seek protection against the outer bodily hardships and privations of life, and they are not confined to human beings. Animals also suffer bodily hardships and difficulties, unlike the Satanic instigations which are restricted to man, and the Jinn are subjoined to him. [Maẓharī from Baiḍāwī]

Verses [114:2 & 3] مَلِكِ النَّاسِ. إِلَهِ النَّاسِ (the King of mankind, the God of mankind.) The reason for adding these two attributes is that the word *rabb*, attributed to a particular thing, could refer to someone other than Allah also, as for instance رَبُّ الدَّارِ *rabb-ud-dār* [land-lord] or رَبُّ الْمَالِ *rabb-ul-māl* [owner of wealth]. But not every master or owner is a king. That is why the attributive name *malik* [King] has been added to indicate that He is not only the 'Lord of mankind' but also the 'King of mankind'. Furthermore, not every king is worthy of worship. Thus the third attributive name *ilāh* [God] has been added to *nās* [people]. The Divine wisdom in combining all three Divine attributes is that each attribute motivates protection. Every master has servants and takes care of them. Likewise, every king has subjects and looks after them. That the worshipped God protects His worshipper is even more obvious. Only Allah, and no other being, is characterized by these three attributes simultaneously. Therefore, seeking Allah's protection by invoking these attributes is the greatest protection, and the invocation is readily acceptable.

Since the first sentence contains the word *nās* (people), the second and the third verses should apparently refer to them with the pronouns by saying, مَلِكِهِمْ *malikihim* [their king] rather than repeating the word *nās* (people). However, this is an occasion of supplication and praise, and as such repetition needs to be employed by deliberate design to add force and clarity to the sublime emotion by creating natural rhyme, rhythm and

melodic sequence. Some scholars have explained the repetition of the word 'nās' differently. They say that the word *nās* occurs five times in this Sūrah. In its first occurrence, it refers to the children. The word *rabb* that refers to nurturer-ship of Allah is a hint to this, because children need nurturing the most. Its second occurrence refers to youth, and the hint in the context is the word *malik* which refers to kingship of Allah. It bears political connotation and is appropriate to the youth. Its third occurrence refers to old age. Old people cut themselves off from the world and look up to Allah alone as the real support of life, and render Him alone true and unconditional obedience and to make Him alone the real object of his love and adoration. The context for this is *ilāh* [God] which points to the Divine worship. Its fourth occurrence refers to the righteous servants of Allah. The contextual hint for this is the word *waswasah* [evil whisperings] because the devil is the enemy of the righteous servants of Allah. His work is to cast evil prompting into the hearts of such people. Its fifth occurrence refers to mischief-makers because protection is sought from their mischief.

Verse [114:4] مِنْ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ (from the evil of the whisperer who withdraws [when Allah's name is pronounced].) After invoking three attributes of Allah, the present verse describes the one from whom protection is sought. He is 'the whisperer who withdraws'. The word *waswās* is originally an infinitive in the sense of *waswasah* 'to whisper [that is, to use breath instead of voice, when saying something in barely audible way]'. But here it is used as an hyperbolic expression to refer to 'Satan' in the sense that 'he is an embodiment of whisper'. Whispering of the Satan means that he invites people to his obedience by a superstitious discourse in a way that its subject is cast into man's heart, but no voice is heard. [Qurtubī].

The word خَنَّاسُ *khannās* is derived from *khanasa* which means 'to sneak, recede or withdraw furtively'. The Satan is so named because he puts himself in a squatting [perched] position on the heart of man. So, when the latter becomes heedless, the former whispers, but when he remembers Allah, he withdraws furtively. When man becomes unmindful of Allah again, the Satan returns. Whenever man remembers Allah, he withdraws. This practice continues persistently. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said:

"Allah has built two houses in the heart of man, in one of which an angel resides and in the other the Satan. The angel urges him to do good works and the Satan induces him to do evil works. When man remembers Allah, the Satan withdraws. And when he stops remembering Allah, the Satan perches on the heart of man and pecks with his beak to whisper into it to do evil things." [Transmitted by Abū Ya'la on the authority of Anas رضي الله عنه, as quoted by Maḏharī].

Verse [114:6] مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ (whether from among the Jinn or Mankind.) This is explicative of the expression *waswās* occurring in verse [4], meaning that the devils from amongst mankind and the Jinn whisper into the breasts of mankind. Thus the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has been enjoined to constantly seek protection against the mischief of sneaking devils, whether from amongst the Jinn or from amongst human devils.

A question may arise here. It is obvious that the Satans can cast a voiceless evil prompting furtively into the hearts of people, but how the human devils can cast evil whisperings? They come forward publicly and use their voice, which is not *waswasah* [whisper]. The answer is that human beings too often cast doubts in the minds of people in an indirect way without uttering them explicitly. Shaikh 'Izzuddīn Ibn 'Abdus-Salām states, in his monograph 'al-Fawā'id fī Mushkilāt-il-Qur'ān', that the 'whisperer from mankind' refers to the whispering of one's own *nafs* (base faculties of the man himself). Just as the Satan casts evil thoughts into man's mind, likewise the base self of man urges him to do evil works. That is why the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has directed us to seek protection in Allah from the evil of our own self in the following supplication:

اللَّهُمَّ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ نَفْسِي وَشَرِّ الشَّيْطَانِ وَشَرِّكُمْ

"O Allah! I seek asylum in You from the evil of myself, from the evil of the Satan and from the evil of idolatry."

The Importance of Seeking Protection against Satanic Whisperings

Ibn Kathīr states that Allah invokes three of His attributive names in this Sūrah, *rabb* [Lord], *malik* [King] and *ilāh* [God], and instructs man to seek refuge with Him against diabolical whisperings, because a Satanic companion is attached to every man, and at every step of the way, the latter's attempt is to destroy the former in different ways. First of all, he induces him to commit sins, and paves the way for him to willfully violate

the Divine laws and injunctions. If he does not succeed in this, he tries to contaminate and destroy his acts of obedience and worship by casting the thoughts of dissimulation, hypocrisy, pride and arrogance. He attempts to create doubts about authentic beliefs and doctrines of Islam in the minds of the learned scholars. The only one who can be saved from the evil of such Satanic pranks is the one whom Allah gives His protection.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said: "There is not a single one of you, but his companion [a devil] has been assigned to him." The Companions enquired: 'Is such a devil companion joined to you also, O Messenger of Allah,?' He replied: 'Yes. However, Allah has helped me against him and he has become submissive to me. As a result, he only commands me to do good.'

It is also confirmed in the two Ṣaḥīḥs from Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه, who reported the story of Sayyidah Ṣafiyyah رضي الله عنها. Once while the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was performing *I'tikaf* in the mosque, one of his wives Sayyidah Ṣafiyyah رضي الله عنها paid him a visit. When she decided to leave, he gave her company to the boundaries of the mosque. On the way, two men of the Anṣār saw them together, The Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Wait! This is Ṣafiyyah bint Ḥuyayy [my wife!]" The two Companions exclaimed: سبحان الله "Pure is Allah, O Messenger of Allah, [how can we have ill thoughts about you?]" The Messenger of Allah ﷺ replied: "Indeed, the devil runs through man's veins like the blood circulates. I feared that he might whisper evil thoughts in your minds. [That is why I had to call you and clarify that the lady with me was no other than my own wife.]"

Special Note

Just as it is necessary for man to avoid evil deeds, it is essential for Muslims to avoid occasions that may cause others to have ill thoughts about them. Should there arise an occasion which may give rise to such bad thoughts, they should immediately clarify the situation, and put an end to it then and there. In sum: This Tradition indicates that Satanic pranks are highly dangerous. It is not easy to avoid them unless we seek refuge with Allah.

A Clarification

There are two types of evil thoughts: [1] voluntary; and [2] involuntary. Here we are warned against voluntary thoughts that

proceed from the will or from one's own free choice. The involuntary thoughts are thoughts that occur without one's will or free choice. Such thoughts come to mind involuntarily and pass away. They are not harmful, nor are they sinful as long as they do not act upon them or speak about them .

A subtle difference between the two Sūrahs of *Mu'awwadhatain*

In the present Sūrah, *rabb* [Lord], *malik* [King] and *ilāh* [God], three Divine attributes have been invoked, while the evil from which protection is sought is only one, that is, the whispering. Conversely, in the previous Sūrah, only one attribute of Allah is mentioned, that is, *rabb-il-falaq* [Lord of the daybreak], but the evils from which protection is sought are many which are mentioned in three verses. This goes to show that the mischief of the Satan is the worst type of evil. The hardships and calamities that befall man in this world, affect his body and mundane affairs, unlike the Satanic pranks which affect man's mundane affairs as well his affairs of the Hereafter. The Satan is always after destroying man's after-life, and that is the most dangerous situation. If man suffers from physical injury or harm, he can find cure or remedy for it; but because the Satan lurks or lies hidden in ambush in every nook and corner of man's life to assault him unnoticed and pull him downwards, away from the Divine, it is not possible to resist him except with the protection granted by Allah. (Therefore, protection from him is sought by invoking three attributes of Allah.)

Human and Satanic Enemies: their differential treatments

One may have some enemies from mankind, and some from Satanic origin. The Holy Qur'ān has directed us to deal with these two kinds of enemies in different ways.

Ibn Kathīr in the preface of his commentary of the Holy Qur'ān has cited three verses of the Holy Qur'ān pertaining to this subject. All three of them have two parts. In the first part, Allah has instructed man to treat his human enemy with kindness, politeness, patience, mercy and compassion. If he does not desist from his evil ways, then *jihād* is prescribed in other verses. We need to wage armed struggle against the devilish elements of human society. But the only way to resist the Satanic enemy is to seek refuge with Allah. The first verse to this effect is in Sūrah Al-A'rāf [7:199]:

خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ

(Take to forbearance, and bid the Fair and ignore the ignorant.)

This pertains to defense against human enemy: In other words we need to grant courteous allowance for his offence, bid him to do good and forego revenge against injustice he might have committed. We must be easy in dealing with him and avoid causing him difficulty. This injunction is defence against human enemy and must be carried out in the first instance. But the next verse [7:200] of the same Sūrah pertains to the Satanic enemy as follows:

وَأَمَّا يَنْزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْغٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

"And if you are stricken with a strike from the Satan, seek refuge with Allah. Surely He is All-hearing, All-knowing."

In other words, if an evil suggestion comes to us from the Satanic enemy, then we need to seek refuge in Allah.

The second verse is in Sūrah Al-Mu'minūn [23:96-98]:

ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ السَّيِّئَةِ

"Repel evil with that which is best.

وَقُلْ رَبِّ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ هَمَزَاتِ الشَّيَاطِينِ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ رَبِّ أَنْ يَحْضُرُونِ

And say: 'O my Lord, I seek Your refuge from the from the strokes of the satans, and I seek Your refuge from that they come to me'.

In the first sentence of these verses, the direction is given to repel the evil caused by human beings with good behavior. But, when it comes to repel the evil caused by Satan, the direction given is to seek refuge in Allah.

The third verse dealing with the same subject is :[41:34]

ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ

Repel (evi) with what is best, and you will see that the one you had mutual enmity with him will turn as if he were a close friend." [34]"

This part of the verse directs how to repel the evil caused by human enemy. If we repel evil deed with a better deed, it would be possible for us

to win over our human enemies and they would become our most devoted friends. As opposed to a human enemy, the other part of the situation is contained in the next verse [36]. It deals with the slinking devil who is invisible, but effective in his attack. The verse reads:

وَأَمَّا يَنْزَغُكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْعٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

"And should a stroke from Shaitan (Satan) strikes you, seek refuge with Allah. Surely, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing." [41:36]

The wordings of this verse are more or less the same as they occur in Sūrah Al-A'rāf. In other words, if an evil suggestion comes to us from the Satan, we are required to seek refuge in Allah, because that is the only defensive weapon against the invisible slinking, sly and cunning enemy.

[Ibn Kathir]

In sum, all three sets of verses discussed above enjoin that a human enemy needs to be treated at first kindly, politely, patiently and compassionately, because human nature was in the primordial state created uncorrupted, and as such kindness, politeness, mercy and pardon could subdue him. However, human beings who have lost their primordial state of innocence, and are deeply sunk in the ocean of ignorance, the passions and the vices of the lower self or base self drag man downwards away from Allah. Some have become infidels, unbelievers and tyrants. They have thus become frontal enemies and come out armed with weapons of war to wage a frontal combat against the believers. The Qur'ān prescribes in other verses that such human enemies should be repelled by force of arms. Unlike the accursed Satan, he is evil in his primal nature, and as such kindness, compassion and pardon does not bring a good effect on him. It is also impossible to have an armed conflict with him. So, the only defence against such an enemy is the celestial weapon of *dhikrullah* [Allah's Remembrance] and *ta'awwudh* [seeking refuge with Allah], with which the entire Qur'ān is replete and the Qur'ān appropriately ends with it.

Moreover, while dealing with a human enemy, a believer is never a loser. If he overcomes the enemy and prevails upon him, his victory is obvious. If the enemy overcomes him or even kills him, then too he will attain high rewards, and a high degree of martyrdom in the Hereafter

which is far better than any worldly attainments. In other words, if a believer is defeated by a human enemy he has not lost anything nor is he harmed in anyway. But the case of the Satanic enemy is totally different. It is sinful to flatter him or please him; and if someone is defeated by him, it is to destroy his entire future in the Hereafter. This is the reason why the best defensive weapon against him is to seek refuge in Allah. This celestial weapon is so powerful and potent that all Satanic guile and treacherous cunning or craft are rendered weak and ineffective.

The Guile of Satan is Feeble

On account of the reasons given above, it may not be misunderstood that fighting the Satan is difficult. To dispel this misunderstanding, Allah has said:

إِنَّ كَيْدَ الشَّيْطَانِ كَانَ ضَعِيفًا

"...No doubt, the guile of the Satan is feeble." (4:76)

It is further clarified in Sūrah An-Nahl:

فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ ﴿٩٨﴾ إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَهُ سُلْطَانٌ عَلَى
الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾ إِنَّمَا سُلْطَانُهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَتَوَلَّوْنَهُ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ
بِهِ مُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

"So, when you recite the Qur'ān, seek the protection of Allah against Satan, the accursed. He is such that he has no power over those who believe in Allah and place trust in their Lord. His power is only over those who befriend him and those who associate partners with Him. [16:98-100]"

Please see Ma'āriful Qur'ān, Vol. 5/pp 412-415 for concise commentary and fuller details of related rulings.

Relationship between the Prologue and the Epilogue of the Qur'ān

Allah prefaced the Qur'ān with Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah which began with His Personal name. It further described His predominant attributes as being *Rabb* or Maintainer of the universe; as being the All-Merciful and Very Merciful and the Sole Judge of rights and wrongs. It defined religion as being His worship alone and imploring Him alone for help - all else being powerless in comparison. It further taught man to pray for true

guidance so that he is able to find the right path, and be established in it. He is taught to pray to be saved from being among those who are condemned and those who have lost the right path after having received it. These factors serve the purpose of man's success and prosperity in this world and in the next world, that is the Hereafter. However, in the process of achieving this purpose man is obstructed by the accursed Satan. He lays various traps inconspicuously utilizing people's different weak points, their sensual and unhealthy desires which he detects and exploits. The Satanic traps or snares need to be shattered or broken to pieces. Seeking refuge in Allah is the only effective protection against these evil powers. That is why the Qur'ān most fittingly ends on this.

Conclusion

All Thanks are due to Allah that the *tafsīr* of the noble Qur'ān has ended with the grace of Allah, and His kindness and help. Praise be to Allah from the beginning to the end, outwardly and inwardly non-manifestly and manifestly. We would not have found the way, had Allah not guided us. May Allah shower His blessings upon the best of creation, Muḥammad ﷺ, His chosen Messenger, the Seal and the leader of the Prophets and Messengers عليهم السلام. Upon him and the other Messengers be His blessings and peace, upon his family and his Companions, all of them. O 'Our Lord, accept from us! Indeed, You - and You alone - are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing! This work completed on Saturday morning 21st of Sha'bān 1392 AH. Co-incidentally, this is the day I was born. I completed 77th year of my life and turned 78 years old. I pray to Allah and hope that the last days of my life would be the best part of my life, doing the best deeds; and that the best days of my life would be the day when I meet my Lord with the blessing of His clear Book and His trustworthy Prophet ﷺ; and that the efforts of this humble servant would be accepted, whose soul was exhausted by ailments, grief, distress and anxieties, and lack of strength; and that He would pardon my errors and shortcomings if the obligations toward His noble Book were not fulfilled; and that the Muslims would benefit by it for aeons of time; and that He makes this work a treasure-trove for the Day when there will be no trading and no friendship, when neither wealth nor family will be of any help. My ability and help to do things come from Him. Pure is Allah; praise be to Him; Pure is Allah, the Great!